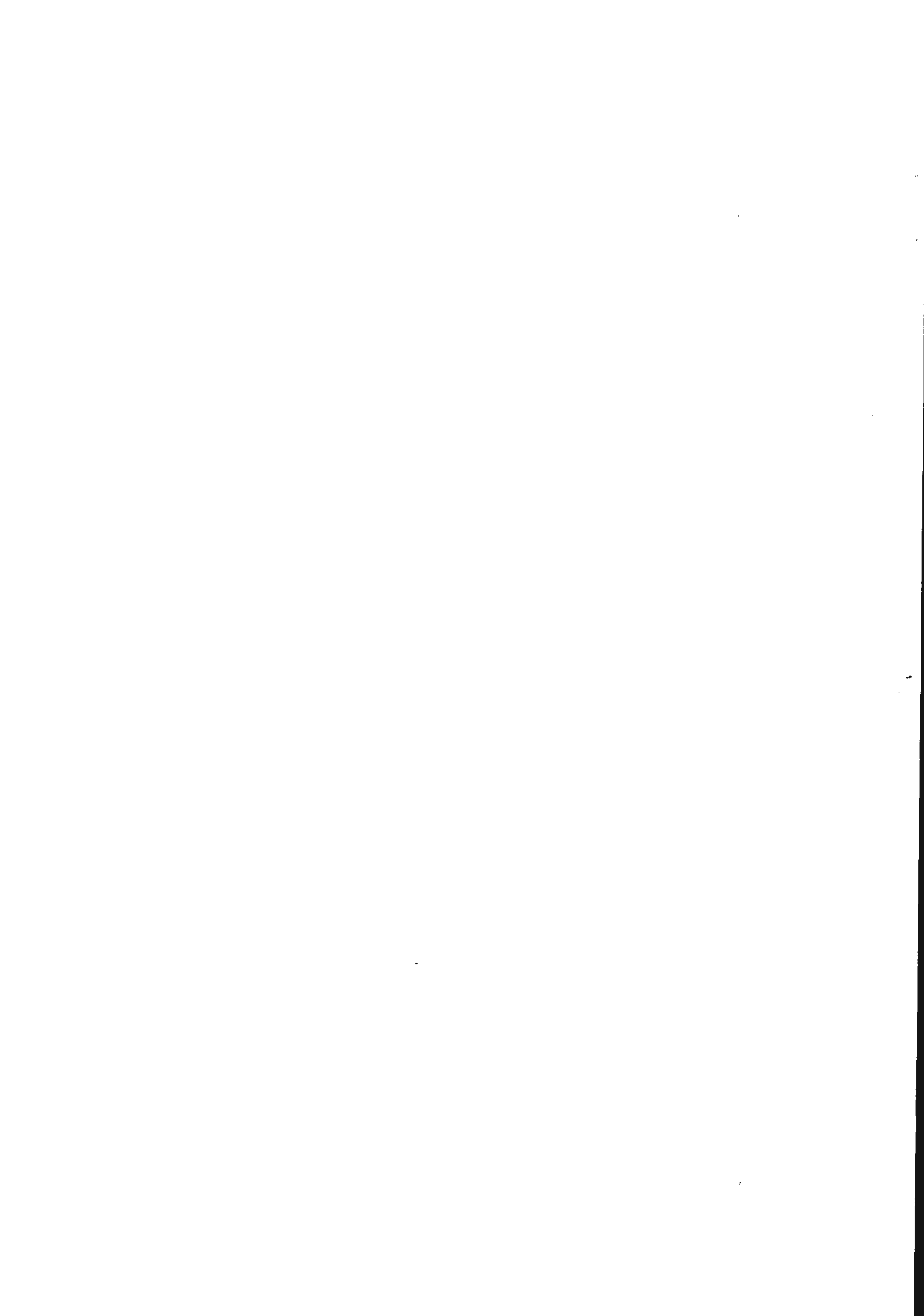
Volker Küster, Robert Setio (Eds.)

Muslim Christian Relations Observed

Comparative Studies from Indonesia and the Netherlands



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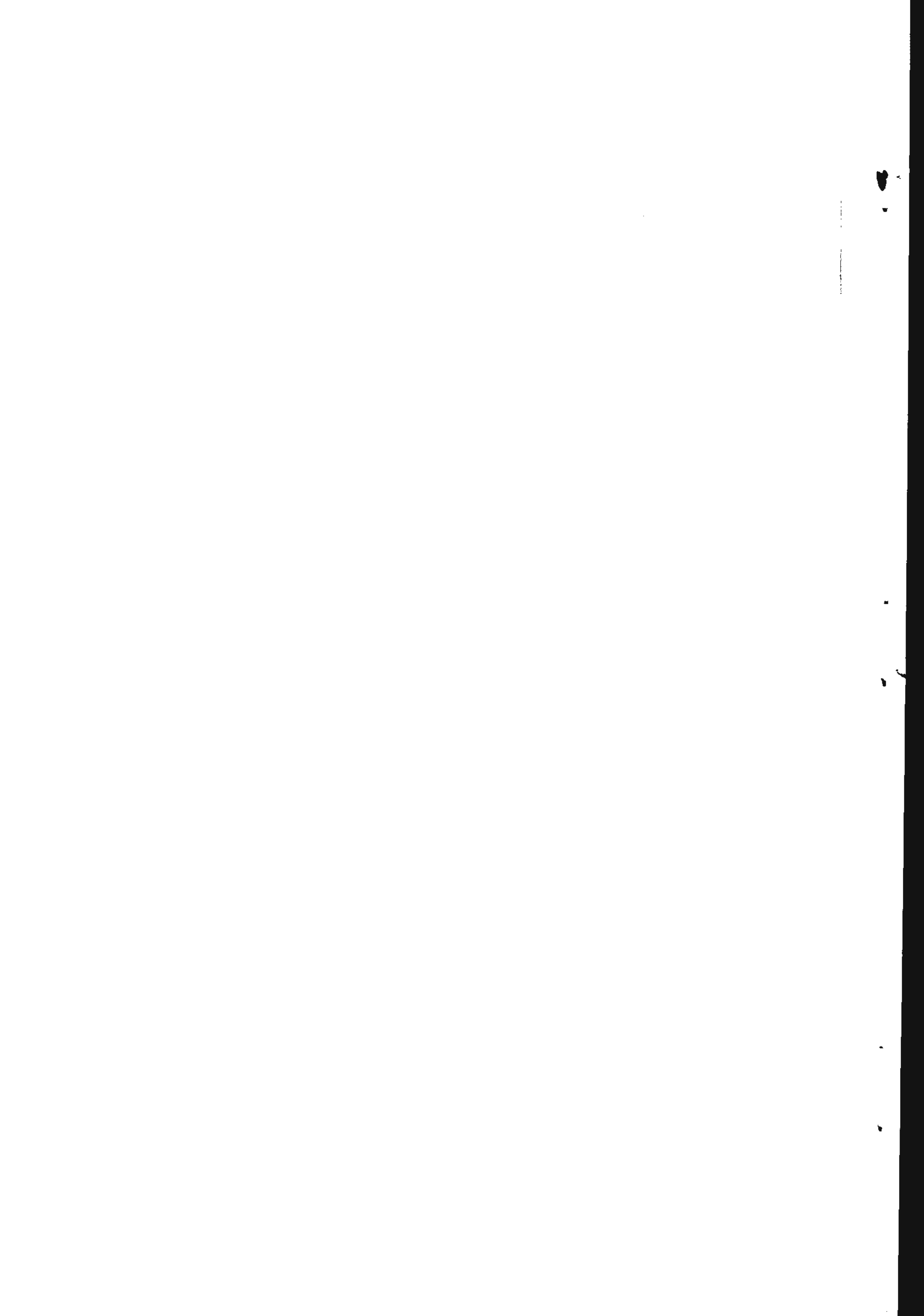

Muslim Christian Relations Observed

Comparative Studies from Indonesia and the Netherlands

Edited by Volker Küster and Robert Setio

EVANGELISCHE VERLAGSANSTALT
Leipzig

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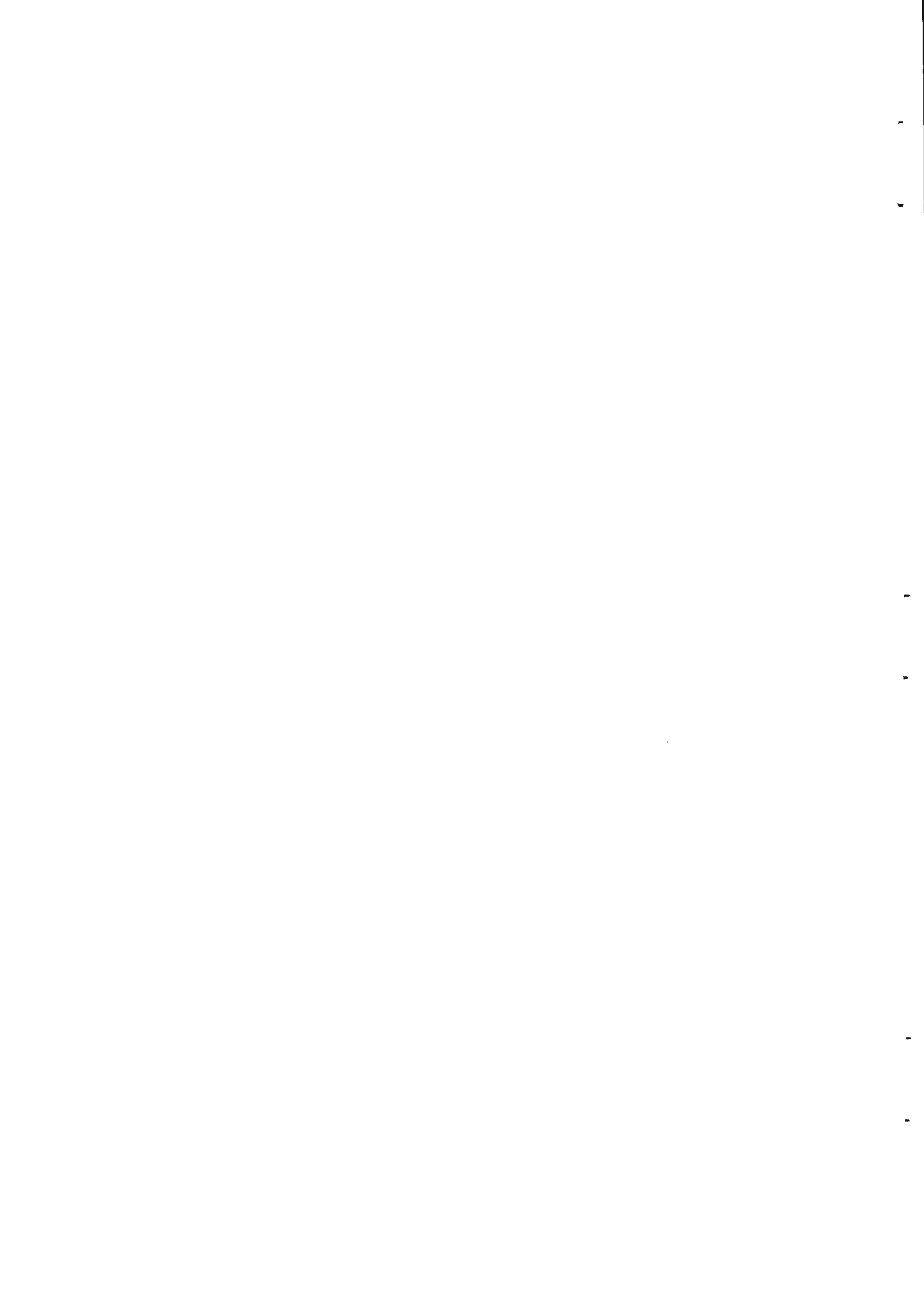

Introduction

Volker Küster and *Robert Setio*

The Indonesian Dutch Consortium on Muslim-Christian Relations is in a certain sense a grass root initiative. Its foundations were laid at a meeting between representatives of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PKN) under the leadership of its mission organization *Kerk in Actie* (KIA) and the Indonesian Council of Churches in Kaliurang, the retreat center of Duta Wacana Christian University (UKDW) in the vicinity of Yogyakarta (6-8 October 2010). During the discussions about future cooperation Muslim-Christian relations were identified as one of the target areas if it comes to theological issues. PERSERTIA, the umbrella organization of the theological schools in Indonesia, chaired by Robert Setio, was co-opted on the spot. In the Netherlands the Protestant Theological University (PThU) as the official body of theological training for the pastors of the PKN was invited for cooperation. Finally colleagues from the Free University in Amsterdam (VU) and the Radboud University in Nijmegen (RUN) came aboard.

In some preliminary meetings between the editors in Yogyakarta and later with some of the Dutch participants in Utrecht, five subthemes were agreed upon: *Identity*, *Religion and State*, *Gender*, *Hermeneutics* and *Theology of Dialogue*. A first consultation was held in Kampen on May 23-24, 2011 bringing together most of the Dutch participants in the research project with an Indonesian delegation. A crucial issue at this meeting was the controversial Islam nota that had recently been discussed at the synod of the PKN and was supposed to be revised in the light of the reactions of international partner churches. The major conference again took place in Kaliurang (March 26-30, 2012). The opening ceremony was celebrated on the UKDW campus

in Yogya. The exhibition "Dialogue through the Arts" that was held in conjunction with the consortium meeting in the university court yard bringing together Christian and Muslim artists also inspired the music and dance performance prepared by lecturers and students of Duta Wacana. A cultural exposure program further introduced the participants to the rich cultural life of Java. The Indonesian hospitality alone made the conference an unforgettable experience.

The genuine feature of the consortium is that it brought together not only Christian academics from the Netherlands and Indonesia, which is already an accomplishment in itself but also Muslim academics from both countries as well as social activists, Christian and Muslim alike. While what is published here is the academic output, the impact of the conference has therefore been much broader. The present publication is organized into five parts following the subthemes identified at the very beginning of the journey. Each section has an individual introduction by its chair person. The book has attracted attention already before its publication. It is hoped that this initiative will be carried on.

While reading the last proofs of the manuscript the editors were reached by the sad news that Prof. Dr. Henk Vroom, one of the founding members of the consortium, passed away. Many of his collegues in the Netherlands and Indoesia will remember his tireless engagement for interreligous dialogue.

The editors, who have had the pleasure of coordinating the endeavor since its inauguration, wish to sincerely thank Corie van der Ven from KIA for her support not only in financial matters. The PThU has covered logistic costs like airfares and hosted the preparatory consultation. The other participating Dutch Universities have also supported their representatives financially. Locherfonds and Stichting Zonneweelde have made this publication possible. We finally thank Dr. Annette Weidhas from the *Evangelische Verlagsanstalt* in Leipzig for the fast and uncomplicated realization of our first common project.

Identity

Introduction

Frans Wijsen

Muslim-Christian relations are often studied in terms of identity. For example, Singgih Nughoro and Nico Kana write about the role of the *pajatan* celebration in the resolution of potential or real conflict in the context of divisive elections in a multireligious location. They analyzed political dynamics as an arena that provoked people to express their identities as different from one another. The competition between political parties was related to an effort to build social identities in contrast to others. After the divisive elections, the *pajatan* ritual was a means to return to their daily routines.[1]

However, the way 'identity' is conceptualized and translated into operational terms is highly contested. Sue Widdicombe distinguishes 'traditional', 'social constructivist' and 'postmodern' models of identity.[2] According to Pierre Bourdieu, the confusion about the concept 'identity', whether 'identities' are understood in a 'primordial' (essentialist) or 'circumstantial' (constructivist) way, stems in part from the fact that scholars tend to forget that "cognitive classifications are always subordinated to practical functions and oriented towards the production of social effects".[3]

The way scholars conceptualize and operationalize 'identity' has huge consequences for the way they study intergroup relations, and

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[1] Singgih Nugroho and Nico Kana. The Easter *pajatan* celebration. Identity differences and efforts to restore harmony, in: Ananta Kuma Giriet et al. (eds), *The development of religion The religion of development*, Delft 2004, 163-169, 167.

[2] Sue Widdicombe, Identity as an Analysts' and a Participants' Resource, in: Charles Antaki and Sue Widdicombe (eds), *Identities in Talk*, London 1998, 191-206. Cf. also Ad Borsboom and Frans Jespers (eds), *Identity and Religion. A multidisciplinary approach*, Saarbrücken 2003.

[3] Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, Cambridge 1992, 220.

conditions of the possibility for inter-religious (e.g. Muslim – Christian) communication and understanding. Whereas Singgih Nughoro and Nico Kana conceptualize identity in terms of group boundaries which potentially lead to clashes that can be reconciled by rituals, Jacqueline Knörr studies group identities in terms of creolization. She defines creolization as

> a process whereby people of different ethnic backgrounds develop a new collective identity which gradually substitutes their respective identities of origin. The process of creolization includes interdependent processes of ethnogenis and indigenization.[4]

According to Knörr "Creolization is likely to take place in environments where people of different – mostly foreign – origins come to live in close proximity to one another".[5] However, this is not necessarily the case as we know from various instances in Indonesia where people define narrow-minded boundaries excluding others.[6] One of the challenges of studying identities is to acquire insight into conditions that explain why interrelatedness leads to retribilization in one case and to creolization in another case.[7]

The authors in this section study construction of religious identities in the plural context in Indonesia and in relations between Muslims and Christians of Indonesian descent in The Netherlands. They use various methods of data collection (questionnaire, semistructured and open interviews, focus group discussion) and data analysis (statistics, contents analysis and discourse analysis). Together these contributions show that identity negotiation is crucial in maintaining harmony and avoiding conflict in Indonesia.

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[4] Jacqueline Knörr. Creolization and Nation-Building in Indonesia. in: Robin Cohen and Paola Toninato (eds). *The Creolization Reader. Studies in mixed identities and cultures.* London and New York 2010. 353-363. 353.

[5] Op. cit., 353.

[6] Carl Sterkens, Muhammad Machasin and Frans Wijsen (eds). *Religion, Civil Society and Conflict in Indonesia.* Münster 2009.

[7] Cf. Frans Wijsen. *Religious Discourse, Social Cohesion and Conflict. Studying Muslim-Christian Relations.* Oxford 2013.

"This is how we are at home." Indonesian Muslims in The Hague

Frans Wijsen and *Jennifer Vos*

In his doctoral dissertation *The Open Society*, Paul Scheffer defines the multicultural society as a drama.[1] He says that the Dutch government policy of "integration retaining the own identity" has failed because it assumed that "society was a collection of subcultures"[2] and thus promoted a "segregation" of society[3] and a "ghetto culture".[4] In his dissertation Scheffer urges the Dutch to move "beyond multiculturalism" with its "us" and "them" divide and to strive for "a new 'us',[5] not an "us" against "them", but an "us" that includes "them".[6]

However, the need for a new 'us' applies also to immigrant communities. In the past there was too much emphasis on the majority group of Dutch citizens opening up to ethnic minority groups. This is onesided, says Scheffer. There is also a lot of prejudice within the immigrant communities, e.g., between ethnic groups such as Creoles and Hindustanis from Surinam,[7] and between "Berbers" and "Arabs" from Morocco. Scheffer quotes at length a city councilor of The Hague who says that "there is no communality" among the immigrant

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[1] Paul Scheffer, *The Open Society: A Story of Avoidance, Conflict and Accommodation*, Doctoral Dissertation, University of Tilburg, 2010. The commercial edition was published as Paul Scheffer, *Immigrant Nations*, Cambridge 2011.

[2] Scheffer, *The Open Society*, 317.

[3] Op. cit., 69.

[4] Op. cit., 75.

[5] Op. cit., 217 and 318.

[6] Op. cit., 223. Scheffer refers to Sumner's ethnocentrism theory and the in-group versus out-group classification which seems to inspire his thinking.

[7] Scheffer, *The Open Society*, 223.

groups and who appeals for a "greater involvement in public affairs".[8] Moreover there is also "a strong polarization between a new middle class and a sizeable underclass"[9] within these immigrant communities.

Scheffer maintains that "international conflicts can have direct consequences for relations between immigrant groups and native population".[10] International conflicts can lead to "hostility" and "conflict of loyalty". For example, the Kurds' struggle for independence in Turkey led to an attack on a Kurdish family in The Hague.[11]

That is why many well-to-do immigrants don't show sympathy for and solidarity with their compatriots. According to Scheffer, "members of the second generation often want to free themselves from their fellow countrymen or fellow believers".[12] And, "Many have only just created a place for themselves in a new land and for perfectly understandable reasons they don't want to be equated with disadvantage".[13]

Against the background of the assumed lack of communality among immigrant groups and the appeal for their greater involvement in public affairs the authors conducted a research project on migrants as mediators in Dutch multicultural society, focussing on post-colonial migrants, particularly Muslims and Christians from Surinam and Indonesia. They seek to answer the following main questions: How do Muslim and Christian immigrants from Indonesia and Surinam remember Muslim-Christian relations in their country of origin? How do they identify and position themselves and others? How do they relate to and communicate with each other in the Netherlands? And how do they contribute to the debate on multicultural society in the Netherlands?

An underlying issue concerns the relation among national, ethnic and religious identities. It is often said that religion is a Western construct, hence non-Westerners are primarily Africans or Asians, and only secondarily Muslims or Christians. So national identity outweighs religious identity. Even if this is true for their country of origin, does it also apply to the diaspora situation? Or does religion become the overriding determinant of identity in that context? The

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[8] Op. cit., 318.
[9] Op. cit., 195.
[10] Op. cit., 172.
[11] Op. cit., 157.
[12] Op. cit., 147.
[13] Op. cit., 61. More or less the same analysis and evaluation is given by Philip Jenkins in his *God's Continent. Christianity, Islam and Europe's Religious Crisis*, Oxford 2007.

research project consists of four case studies of Surinamese Christians, Surinamese Muslims, Indonesian Muslims, and Indonesian Christians in The Hague.

For the purpose of this article we focus on Indonesian Muslims only.[14] The material for this contribution is generated by collecting naturally occurring data through Indonesian organizations and by conducting interviews with eight key informants, all of whom were first generation migrants. Four of them were over fifty years old and four were younger than fifty. Four respondents were male and four female. Two respondents came to the Netherlands as embassy personnel, one respondents is an imam, and one is a student. Two came to the Netherlands due to marriage-migration, one came for work, and one came to study and never went back to Indonesia. The data is analyzed using the socio-cognitive model of discourse analysis developed by Norman Fairclough, among others.[15] In this model, the cognitive refers to the ideational unit of analysis and the social refers to the relational unit of analysis. The relational unit is subdivided into subject positions and social relations. Subject positions are also called social identities. For the purpose of this article we focus on identities.

First, we make an analysis of the linguistic practice (description). Next, we analyze the discursive practice (interpretation) and the social practice (explanation). As interpretation and explanation go together, we combine these two steps. We explain the levels and stages of analysis by doing, and end with conclusions and discussion.

1. Analysis of linguistic practice

The first method is description – the analysis of the formal features of the text.[16] "It is sometimes useful for analytic purposes to focus upon a single word" or on "culturally salient keywords", says Fairclough.[17]

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[14] To the best of our knowledge, this group has not been extensively studied by others. There are a good number of studies of Indonesian Christians and Churches in The Netherlands, such as that by Mechteld Jansen, Indonesian and Moluccan Churches in The Netherlands, in: *Journal of Reformed Theology* 2, 2008, 168-187. A first report of our research was published (in Dutch) as Jennifer Vos and Sandra van Groningen, Islam en Burgerschap sluiten elkaar niet uit. Indonesische Moslims in Nederland, in: *Tijdschrift voor Religie* 3, 2012, 14-26.

[15] Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, Cambridge 1992. For a more elaborate explanation of socio-cognitive discourse analysis, cf. Frans Wijsen, "There are radical Muslims and Normal Muslims". An analysis of the discourse on Islamic extremism, in: *Religion* 43, 2013, 70-88; and Frans Wijsen, *Religious Discourse, Social Cohesion and Conflict. Studying Muslim-Christian Relations*, Oxford 2013.

[16] Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, 76f.

[17] Op. cit., 185f.

Another focus for analysis is "alternative wordings and their political and ideological significance".[18]

I feel very sad about it

To begin with it is helpful to summarize the life history of one of our interviewees, just to show the complexity of the situation that some Indonesian Muslims in the Netherlands experience. Our interviewee narrated how she came to the Netherlands for further studies twenty years ago. She came to the Netherlands because her brothers worked here as cooks in an Indonesian restaurant. "They just came as adventurers", as so many Indonesian men and women did.

Our interviewee met her husband here. He is a Dutch man whose father was Indo Dutch. His father was born in the Netherlands but his grandfather was an Indonesian Muslim. He fought in the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army. "I know many Indo Dutch". Our interviewee feels affinity with them. "They had a hard time". She said that these Indo Dutch feel so happy when they can talk about Indonesia in the past. "It is nice to chat with them, about food or language".

Our interviewee's husband converted to Islam, as did several other Dutch men who married Indonesian Muslim women. The Dutch converts have their own Dutch group in the Indonesian mosque in The Hague. Our interviewee's children have been raised in an Islamic way. "I am Indonesian", she says, "and I am very happy to remain Indonesian". "I have an Indonesian passport, and I will never take a Dutch passport". "It is a feeling", she says, "just a feeling".

Our interviewee misses her family at home. Visiting the Indonesian mosque gives her the feeling of being in Indonesia for a short while. Her family-in-law is Catholic. Faith was not mentioned until they got married. Then her husband decided to convert to Islam. At independence his grandfather was given the choice to stay in Indonesia or to leave for the Netherlands, just like other Indonesians who fought with the Dutch. He chose the Netherlands because he thought that his children would have a better future there.

Our interviewee was raised as a nationalist. The story of her husband's grandfather was very painful for her. He was homesick and never felt at home in the Netherlands; the fact that he was a Muslim was kept secret. He married a Catholic woman. Our interviewee's family at home in Indonesia knows that she is married to an Indo

[18] Op. cit., 77.

Dutch man. They do not know the life history of her husband's grandfather, and according to her, it is "not their business". To them it is important that she married a Muslim.

This is mini Indonesia

The Indonesian Muslim community in The Hague and the Netherlands in general is *very diverse*, and the criteria for belonging and not belonging are fluid and depend on the social position that is taken by the speaker. For employees of the Indonesian embassy Indonesians are Indonesian passport holders. But there are Indonesians who have been here for forty or fifty years, whose Dutch language is very poor and who still hold an Indonesian passport because they dream of going back some day. There are others who consider themselves to be Indonesians but who have a Dutch passport because they have a Dutch spouse. And there are descendents of the Indo Dutch, some of whom converted to Islam, who celebrate their Indonesian roots but who are not considered to be Indonesian, at least not by embassy officials.

Also those who are considered to be 'real' Indonesian Muslims are very diverse in terms of social position and ethnic background, Sundanese, Javanese, Madurese, and so on. "Besides being Indonesians, we are also members of our ethnic group". Some came here for study or work a long time ago and stayed here because of their children and grandchildren. Others are students or Indonesian government employees who are here for a short period of only four or five years. There are people from Jakarta, and people from Surabaya, Bandung or Malang. They all may have their private reasons for staying or leaving.

Despite their diversity and individuality there is a common feeling or affinity among them, which is "difficult to describe". As one of them said, "Our customs do not disappear overnight". Family ties are very strong. "We are all here as guests ... This is not our homeland, so to speak ...". And "This mosque ... this is a little piece of Indonesia. This is how we are at home". An employee of the Indonesian embassy says, "This is our Indonesian philosophy ...unity in diversity".

We are more flexible

Asked to describe further "how we are at home", the Indonesian Muslims say that they are "not like Arabs", or Muslims of Moroccan or Turkish descent. They are different. Indonesian Muslims describe themselves as "moderate Muslims". They are "more flexible", "more

tolerant", "and more open". "Other Muslims", who come from Turkey or Morocco. "are a bit strict" – for example in terms of food restrictions and gender relations. Indonesian Muslims say that they are "less strict", "more modern".

An imam of the Indonesian mosque, Al Hikmah, and the chairman of the Association of Muslim Youths in Europe (PPME) say, "We are the most accessible mosque … of the Netherlands". "No scary things happen here", "we don't want to promote ourselves". And they continue, "There is no coercion here". "People come themselves". "There are many Dutch men here. They marry an Indonesian woman, they meet us here, they talk, and then …[they convert]". But "we do not propagate ourselves". "It comes about quite naturally, through face-to-face contact". In the past, when "women came in mini skirts, we did not say anything. We did not confront them". These things "need time".

An employee of the Indonesian embassy, who also is the vice-chairman of the Indonesian mosque, says, "We are mild", "very peaceful", "open for everybody", "it is a very loose organization", "very informal", "very individualistic". And he continues, "What we have in this mosque here in The Hague is just a reflection of what we have in Indonesia". "This is mainstream [Islam]".

With respect to *halal* food, "as long as it is not pork, for example beef or chicken, it is okay to eat, [even] if it is not slaughtered in the right way". And, "we don't separate men and women. In our mosque we are always mixed; it is just that the males are in front and the females are at the back [of the mosque]". There are just differences in interpretation. Some are Muhammadiyah members; others are members of Nahdlatul Ulama.

We don't walk fast

Asked how they relate to Dutch society, and if life has become more difficult for them as Muslims since 9/11, the Indonesian Muslims in The Hague say that this is not the case. Maybe for Christians it was and is easier to find their way here, as there were many Churches to help them. "Christians have good connections". "There were churches everywhere".

In a certain way, life has even become easier for Indonesian Muslims. In the beginning, everything was strange. When we [Indonesian Muslims] came here, "There were no mosques". And, "There were no shops that sold *halal* meat. We had to go to a village, to a farmer and

slaughter the animals ourselves". The interviewees say that "now there are mosques everywhere" and "you can get *halal* food easily".

Thus, "Life has changed, yes, but in a positive way". "Maybe we are a bit more reluctant to talk openly since 9/11", says an interviewee, "But we don't talk about politics [in the mosque] anyway". Yes, "The media puts us in a box [with others]. Then they have something to write about. But in fact, we are not so different [from the Dutch]".

If some Indonesian Muslims long to go back to Indonesia, this has nothing to do with the situation in the Netherlands becoming worse for Muslims. On the contrary, the Netherlands is better [than Islamic countries] as far as human relations are concerned. In the Netherlands "the treatment of the people is fair and just". If Indonesian Muslims long to go back to Indonesia, this is "pure feeling", "purely individual". "The situation [in the Netherlands] has nothing to do with it". Some send their children to Indonesia to study.

Asked why Indonesian Muslims are invisible or silent in Dutch society they say, "This is Indonesian culture". "It is not our character to be outgoing". "The Indonesian is a bit reserved by nature". "We avoid confrontation". The Indonesian Muslims describe themselves as "quiet" people. "We don't walk fast". We say, "Don't hurry, take it easy". Or "We are calm, imperturbable".

[Indonesian] Islam is "rather individualistic" and it has a "loose organization", it is "informal" and "inward", not concerned with [*halal*] food or clothes [headscarves]. "We don't care [about these things]. Some other (non-Indonesian) Muslims say, "We are a group and thus we speak on behalf of the group; we form a block". "This is not what moderate Muslims say".

"The Dutch are more direct [than the Indonesians]." "We are not afraid of Mr. Wilders".[19] "I can blame him [for accusing us] but then I am in the newspaper tomorrow". "We don't look for the media" and "we don't practice politics anyway". The imam said "This happens also in Indonesia", and "This is not new". "Even the family of the prophet [Muhammad] wanted to kill the prophet". Thus, "This is not so strange for us". "If we behave in a decent way", and "if we do not feel offended by this person [Mr. Wilders], we do not need to be scared", and "we should just continue quietly".

"We are not afraid". "Just be patient and wait". "Don't react emotionally". A Muslim student said, "The tension has become much

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[19] The interviewee refers to Geert Wilders, chairperson of the Freedom Party, who is accused of promoting Islamophobia.

greater than before". "We discussed it in the Muslim community" and we said, [we should] "Just, take it easy" and, [we] "don't take it personally".

We don't talk about religion

Asked how they relate to Indonesian Christians they say that relations are "good", "flexible", and "harmonious". But relations between Muslims and Christians are more social than religious. Indonesian Muslims say that if they are at a marriage or a funeral [with Christians], they "celebrate together", they "eat together", as human beings. But "We do have certain boundaries", says an imam of the Indonesian mosque, "We do not pray together".

For some interviewees, religion is not so relevant, or may not be important at all in everyday life. For other interviewees, religion is "dangerous" and "too sensitive" to talk about. "We watch television and we see a lot of terrorism. We don't talk about that". "We don't want to hurt each other". Some people tend to think, "My belief is better than yours". The interviewees feel uncomfortable with this thought.

A member of the Association of Indonesian Students (PPI) says that they "decided not to talk about religion". "We just want to meet each other [as students] and we respect each other's religion". "We have members from all religions" and "we visit each other's homes". "It is not a big problem". "We respect each other; this is my religion, this is your religion; that's it". "We don't really care about different religions". This is because: "We are from the same country. Only our religion is different".

Thus, relations between Muslims and Christians are "harmonious", "very harmonious", just as in Indonesia. For Indonesian students, being an Indonesian is more important than being a Muslim or a Christian. Relations are spontaneous, natural. Interfaith dialogue is something that is organized by the embassy.

Indonesia has pancasila

Asked how the situation in Indonesia affects Indonesian Muslims in the Netherlands, some interviewees say that their experience of a mild and tolerant Islam in Indonesia makes them different from other Muslims. In Indonesia, "The Mosque stands next to the Church, as is the case in Jakarta."

Asked if there were no problems, an imam of the Indonesian mosque answered that problems were "influenced by political interests". But in the mosque, "we don't talk about politics", "we leave politics out". Thus, "problems are not caused by religion" because "Islam as religion is peaceful, very peaceful".

One of the interviewees is married to an Indonesian Christian woman. He describes his family as 'chrislam.' Both of the partners kept their own faith, although their daughters were raised as Christians. The respondent said that "islam is good, Christianity is good. The important thing is how you do the things you do and how you behave".

Asked if tensions between Muslims and Christians in the Moluccas affected Indonesians in the Netherlands, an employee of the Indonesian embassy answered that he had been "too short a time in the Netherlands" and that he had "no experience of tensions". But, "We know that there are groups of Indonesians here who come to us to cope with that situation". In this case, "We offer dialogue". "This is the only thing we can do". "We don't take an active role in that kind of tension". "Our role is to serve and to protect our citizens living in the Netherlands".

The interviewees say that in Indonesia they were used to celebrating Christmas or Id-ul Fitri together, and that they went to each others' marriages and funerals without any problem. And they still do that here But relations between Muslims and Christians are on the interpersonal level, from human being to human being, not in the sense of interreligious dialogue, organized by the embassy.

Asked how they promote interfaith dialogue, an employee of the Indonesian embassy answered: "We invite an expert to give a speech". "If we have a mild individual, we can have a very peaceful discussion." And when the board of the mosque invites preachers and teachers they try to be balanced. "Sometimes we have a hardliner". Then we have to discuss "how to control that". "We need to bring someone with a very soft and peaceful kind of talk, not with a different view" [different from the mainline view].

"Our founding fathers said that even though the majority is Muslim we don't base our nation on the teaching of Islam. The philosophy is based on diversity". *Pancasila* means five principles: belief in God, respect for humanity, unity, prosperity and justice.

Some interviewees said, "it is a bit different here. People are more openminded here" [in the Netherlands]. A Muslim student said,

"When I first came here I thought that men and woman can't shake hands". I was told, "No, it is okay, it is normal here". "Even in Indonesia they do it". "The school I came from, though, was a Muslim School". But, "finally I got used to it".

The student, who was born on Sumatra but raised in Surabaya, also said that it depends on where you come from and how you were raised in the family. "People who are from Jakarta are more open ... The way they live is too open, I think. They were smoking and drinking alcohol until they were drunk. I was surprised".

Employees of the Indonesian embassy say that the Indonesian mosque in The Hague is just a reflection of how mosques are in Indonesia. It is "open to everybody as long as they don't have their shoes on".

We don't talk about politics

There used to be one Moluccan imam in The Hague. But there are very few Moluccan Muslims in The Hague. Moluccan Muslims have their mosques in Waalwijk and Ridderkerk. The imam in The Hague has monthly contact with his colleagues in Waalwijk and Ridderkerk but they are independent.

According to the employees of the Indonesian embassy, there are three groups of Moluccans, those who consider themselves to be primarily Dutch; those who consider themselves to be primarily Indonesian, and those who consider themselves to be primarily Moluccan. The latter have the ideal of the Free Moluccan State (RMS).

Moluccans are "more direct". But this is "no problem". Showing diversity between Indonesians and Moluccans, two interviewees referred to a saying: Some Indonesians "are like rice"; others are like "rice with sambal".

The mosque in Waalwijk has a reputation as pro RMS. The difference is not Islamic belief but politics. But, "we don't talk about politics". The unwritten rule seems to be, "leave politics out". No politics in the mosque. Students of the PPI say: "We talk about our studies, about going out in the evening, about culture. We don't talk about politics".

They are Dutch

Asked how they relate to the Indo Dutch, participants' answers depend on their social position and duration of stay in the Netherlands. For those who have been in the Netherlands for a long time, these re-

lations are ambiguous. On the one hand, the Indo Dutch share a common history with the Indonesians and many share family ties. On the other hand, confronted with the need to choose between the Netherlands and Indonesia, they chose the Netherlands. "This is difficult"; "very painful".

For young people, colonial history seems completely irrelevant, and it did not play a role in their decision to come to the Netherlands. They are simply adventurers who tried their luck in Australia or the United States, as so many Indonesians do, and ended up in the Netherlands by chance, due to availability of sponsorships, and the pervasiveness of the English language, or just because of job opportunities.

For Indonesian embassy employees, the Indo Dutch "are Dutch". Although they have a common history, and some of them long to return to Indonesia, they are not Indonesians. There is a desire to remain "pure" Indonesian. This is also reflected in the separation between Tong Tong Fair and Pasar Malam,[20] the latter now being organized at the Indonesian School by the Indonesian embassy. "The Tong Tong Fair is no longer purely Indonesian". According to the Indonesian embassy employees the Tong Tong Fair had become more broadly Asian, no longer purely serving Indonesian interests.

2. Analysis of discursive and social practice

The second and the third methods are interpretation and explanation. Although Fairclough sees them as different stages, he sometimes treats them together.[21] When participants produce (communicate) and consume (interpret) texts they draw on their "cognitive apparatus" or "members' resources"[22] stored in their longterm memory.[23] These resources are cognitive in the sense that they are in people's heads; they are social in the sense that they are socially generated and socially effective.[24] When participants draw on their mental model they are reproduced or transformed.[25] For the purpose of this contribution we look at ideational and relational transformations, particularly concerning subject positions or social identities.

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[20] Pasar Malam refers to the evening markets which are quite popular in Indonesia and which are also organized in The Netherlands.
[21] Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power*, Harlow 2001, 117-139.
[22] Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 133 and 118.
[23] Op. cit., 8f.
[24] Op. cit., 20 and 22.
[25] Op. cit., 158-161.

Indonesia
Various interviewees remember harmonious and friendly relations between Muslims and Christians at home. They used to visit each other at Id-ul-Fitr or Christmas and celebrate together at marriages and funerals. But these relations were interpersonal in nature, from human being to human being, rather than interreligious.

This common background makes them different from Muslims of Moroccan or Turkish descent who used to live in more mono-religious countries where they hardly met non-Muslims. "This mosque in The Hague is just a reflection of what we have in Indonesia". Indonesian Muslims position themselves as "moderate", "mild", "flexible" and "tolerant". This makes them different from "Arabs" who are stricter.

In relation to Dutch society, Indonesian Muslims identify themselves as "quiet", "silent", "a bit reserved by nature", "not outgoing". As one interviewee says, "this belongs to Indonesian culture".

Despite diversity, there is a common feeling. "Our customs do not disappear overnight". But "Besides being Indonesians, we are also members of our ethnic groups". Thus, apart from national identity there is an ethnic identity. But, "this is not *adat*. *Adat* is too complex". "People [nowadays] want simple rituals". Adat are unwritten pre-Islamic traditions in Indonesia.

Some informants draw on the *pancasila* concept, the five principles and the Indonesian philosophy of national unity, or unity in diversity. Other informants draw on the experience from the Association of Indonesian Students (PPI). This is not an organization of Muslims, but an organization of students of all faiths. They decided not to talk about religion. As one of them said, "We respect each other. This is my religion, this is your religion", thereby implicitly reproducing a Qur'an verse, "to you be your religion, and to me my religion" (Sura 109: 6). Religion is not mentioned at embassy celebrations.

Islam
Indonesian Muslims identify Islam as a "peaceful, very peaceful" religion. It is rather "individualistic" and "inward". Islam has a "loose organization" and it is very "informal". Thus, Indonesian Muslims not only position themselves as "quiet" and "reserved" people which, according to them, is part of their culture, but also as "moderate" and "flexible" Muslims, which is their definition of Islam.

An imam of the Indonesian mosque draws on Umar to explain why Indonesian Muslims are not afraid of Mr. Wilders. "From the

time of the prophet till the end of the world there will always be people who are pro or contra Islam", says the imam. Even Umar wanted to kill the prophet because he threatened the unity of the family [clan]. But when he heard his own sister reciting a Qur'an verse, he converted to Islam and became the second Caliph". This example is used to demonstrate that hardliners such as Mr. Wilders are of all place and all times. They come and go. So Muslims need not to be afraid of Mr. Wilders.

Some informants draw on the experience of the Association of Muslim Youths in Europe (PPME). PPME aims to keep alive and strengthen Islamic faith in the Dutch context. It meets every Saturday in the Al Hikmah mosque, administered but not owned, by the Dutch embassy. According to PPME members, Muslim-Christian relations are disturbed by politics. Therefore, "we don't talk about politics"; "we leave politics out".

Colonialism

Some Indonesian Muslims draw on colonial history to create a common ground between them and the (Indo) Dutch, or to emphasize differences between them and Moluccans, depending on their social position and duration of stay in the Netherlands.

One interviewee, whose father-in-law was Indo Dutch and whose husband's grandfather was an Indonesian Muslim, said that "the Indo Dutch had a hard time". The interviewee, who said that she was raised as a nationalist, said that they did not know what happened in the Japanese Camps. She feels pity for the Indo Dutch who suffered. Yes, it is "part of our common history".

When asked about the Moluccans, an employee of the Indonesian embassy referred to colonial history. "Yes, the Moluccan people are quite an interesting group", he said. "They were promised their own free country, and some of them are still waiting for this promise to come true". But, in his view, Indonesians are Indonesian passport holders. And since most Moluccans and most Indo Dutch are Dutch citizens, they are not part of the Indonesian community.

Conclusions

Looking back at the social identity construction of Indonesian Muslims in The Hague we first notice the huge variety of this immigrant population. As one informant said, this is "mini Indonesia", so all distinctions from within Indonesia are also present in The Hague. But

they also have a "common feeling" of being Indonesians and they refer to the national philosophy of unity in diversity to describe "how we are at home".

In answers to the question of how they identify and position themselves, we see that Indonesian Muslims in the Netherlands clearly distinguish themselves from Muslims of Turkish or Moroccan descent. The say that they are "more flexible" or "more open" and that they "are not like Arabs" who – according to them – are "a bit strict".

When asked how Indonesian Muslims contribute to the debate on multiculturalism, we first notice that Indonesian Muslims are rather silent. According to one interviewee, "this is part of Indonesian culture". Indonesians are reserved people "by nature". But according to others it is also due to their interpretation of Islam, which is rather individual and inward. "As long as it is not pork, we don't care about [*halal*] food or clothes".

Having experienced extremism in Indonesia, their contribution to the debate on the multicultural society in the Netherlands seems to be: "don't panic"! Hardliners are of all time and all places. They come and go. So, "don't be afraid", just "take it easy", and "go your own way". Moreover they seem to favor "a silent policy", not "interfaith dialogue". Interfaith dialogue is something that is organized by the Indonesian embassy, institutionalized, more top-down than bottom-up. They seem to favor informal face-to-face contact, from human being to human being, thus more interpersonal than interreligious dialogue.

"I come from a Pancasila Family." Muslims and Christians in Indonesia

Frans Wijsen and *Suhadi Cholil*

Since the Reformation in Indonesia, there has been a return of religion to the public domain.[1] During the New Order regime religion was relegated to private homes and religious institutions and inter-religious conflicts were covered by the *pancasila* ideology of national unity. At present, people speak openly about introduction of *syariah* law and Indonesia becoming an Islamic country, respecting the rights of religious minorities. The authors are involved in a common research project studying this socio-religious transformation process in Indonesia.

Social identity theorists tend to conceptualize and study identity and diversity in objectivist and positivist ways.[2] They write about national, ethnic or religious identities as if identity is based on primordial properties that are shared by the members of a group. They both unite them and distinguish them from others. Consequently, national, ethnic or religious identities are exclusive and differences unbridgeable. This is the "cultured collide"[3] or "clash of civilizations" perspec-

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[1] Hanneman Samuel and Henk Schulte Nordholt (eds), *Indonesia in Transition. Rethinking 'Civil Society', 'Region', and 'Crisis'*, Yogyakarta 2004; Carl Sterkens, Muhammad Machasin and Frans Wijsen (eds), *Religion, Civil Society and Conflict in Indonesia*, Münster 2009.

[2] Henry Tajfel, Social categorization, in: Henry Tajfel (ed.), *Differentiation between Groups*, London 1978, 61-76; Henry Tajfel and John Turner, The Social identity theory of intergroup behaviour, in: Stephen Worchel and William G. Austin (eds), *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, Chicago 1986, 7-24.

[3] Jan Blommaert, How much culture is there in inter-cultural communication?, in: Jan Blommaertand and Jef Verschueren (eds), *The Pragmatics of Intercultural and International Communication*, Amsterdam and Philadelphia 1991, 13-31, 19.

tive.[4] Seen as such, a multicultural society is a tragedy and intercultural communication an illusion. But inter-cultural communication, in a partial sense at least, is possible. Thus this way of looking at and studying identity is inappropriate.[5]

In our research we are interested in alternative ways of theorizing about and studying religious identity and interreligious relations. The main objectives are (1) to acquire insight into the relation between religious discourse and (the absence of) social cohesion (internal objective), and by doing so (2) to contribute to a theory and method of studying interreligious relations (external objective). We want to know whether and why people elevate their religious identities over other, e.g. ethnic, national, economic or gender identities; and whether or not this leads to social conflict. Or is it the other way round, do existing conflicts in the society express themselves in religious rhetoric and vocabulary?

Narrowed down, the main research questions are: (1) How do Muslims and Christians identify and position themselves and others, and (2) What are the socio-cognitive effects of their identification and positioning? Sub questions related to question (1) are (a) how do Muslims and Christians speak about each other? And (b) how do Muslims and Christians speak with each other? Sub questions related to question (2) are (a) what are conditions for understanding / misunderstanding? And (b) what are conditions for cohesion (convergence) or conflict (divergence)?

We tried to answer our questions and achieve our aims by conducting a case study in Surakarta. Surakarta has about 750.000 inhabitants, but could count 1,5 million daytime town dwellers. Surakarta's population is mainly Javanese with Chinese and Arab minority groups. 77 percent are Muslims and 22 percent are Christians; others are Hindus, Buddhists or Javanese (indigenous) believers. Surakarta has had a series of outbursts of violence, culminating in the Solo Riots (Surakarta) in 1998.[6]

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[4] Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*, New York 1996.

[5] Sue Widdicombe, Identity as an Analyst's and a Participants' Resource, in: Charles Antaki and Sue Widdicombe (eds), *Identities in talk*, London, Thousand Oaks 1998, 191-206, 192-194; Marianne Jorgensen and Louise Phillips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, London, 100-102.

[6] Jemma Purdey, The other May riots. Anti-Chinese violence in Solo, May 1998, in: Charles Coppel (ed.), *Violent Conflict in Indonesia. Analysis, Representation, Resolution*. London and New York 2006, 72-89.

We conducted twenty-four focus group discussions, eight groups of Muslims only, eight groups of Christians only and eight groups of Muslims and Christian together. Within each category we had groups of males and females who were subdivided on the basis of age (young and old) and profession (educated and uneducated). For the purpose of this article we focus on the groups of Muslims and Christians together.

We defined identity as "narrative of the self"[7] and studied it from a social constructivist point of view, using social-cognitive discourse analysis as method. In the socio-cognitive model of discourse analysis, developed, among others, by Norman Fairclough,[8] the cognitive refers to the ideational unit of analysis and the social refers to the relational unit of analysis. The relational unit is subdivided into subject positions and social relations. Subject positions are also called social identities and this is what we focus on in this article.

First, we make an analysis of the linguistic practice (description) at the micro, mezzo and macro level of social identity. Next we make an analysis of the discursive (interpretation) and the social practice (explanation). As interpretation and explanation go together, we combine these two steps. We explain the levels and stages of analysis by doing. We end with conclusions and discussion.

1. Analysis of linguistic practice

The first method is description; this is the analysis of the formal features of the text.[9] "It is sometimes useful for analytic purposes to focus upon a single word" or on "culturally salient keywords", says Fairclough.[10] Another focus for analysis is "alternative wordings and their political and ideological significance".[11]

(1) Micro level

We speak about identity at the micro or individual level when people speak for themselves, as believers of their religion (Christianity or Islam) and as citizens of the nation (Indonesian).

[7] Anthony Giddens, Modernity and Self-identity. Self and identity in the late modern age, Cambridge 1991, 76.

[8] Norman Fairclough, Discourse and Social Change, Cambridge 1992.

[9] Fairclough, Discourse and Social Change, 76f.

[10] Op. cit., 185f.

[11] Op. cit., 77.

My personal view is rather different

Participants clearly distinguish personal beliefs and institutional beliefs. For example, a male Muslim professional participant said,

> My background is Muslim Muhammadiyah ... The people of Muhammadiyah are sometimes perceived as very, very puritan. If [they] meet Christians, [they are] rather ... harsh. But in everyday life I could not escape my personal view, which is rather different [from Muhammadiyah]. I am more open, not only in social affairs. I and my Catholic or Christian friends often talk about our belief, our faith. And of course, we look for a meeting point, not for differences [between us].

In this text, the speaker does three things. First, he says that he comes from Muhammadiyah background. Second, he describes Muhammadiyah members as "very, very puritan", this is to say that they are rather harsh when meeting Christians. Third, he says that he is not like that. His "personal view" is "more open" than the views of Muhammadiyah members.

Another Muslim participant in the group of young females said, "I am Muslim, but (I) don't wear *jilbab* (veil)". By adding "but" the participant suggests that it is common for Muslim women to wear a veil. But she does not do that. So the participants suggest that there are shared (or social) identities but that individual variation exists.

I come from a pancasila family

Participants seldom refer to themselves as individuals. Instead, they refer to their family backgrounds. When they describe themselves as "progressive", "open" and "tolerant persons", this is to say that they are "not fanatic"; participants say that they come from a "*pancasila* family", a "plural family" or a "democratic family".

A Muslim participant said, "My extended family from my father's line exists of Christians and Muslims". Similarly a Christian participant said, "My father is Hindu, my mother is Muslim, their children are Christians". A young Christian female participant said: "I grew up in and come from two different cultures and religions. Fortunately my family is a very democratic family that respects the principle of human dignity". The speaker uses the phrase "democratic family" in relation to tolerance of religious differences in the family and respect for human dignity. Another female participant talks about "progressiveness" *(maju)* and the appreciation of religious plurality in a family. She says that nowadays people are "already quite progressive ... People do not really problematize the multireligious family".

A Christian participant said, "in my extended family the two religions [Islam and Christianity] are mixed and our tolerance is very extraordinary, very extraordinary". She uses over-wording ("very extraordinary, very extraordinary") to emphasize religious "tolerance" in her family. Another Christian participant makes the same point by saying that "[my] relatives are Muslims and Christians. Moreover, many uncles of mine are Muslim".

Several participants use the label "*Pancasila* family" to say that their families comprise different religions. A Christian participant in the professional group discussion stated, "I grew up in a *Pancasila* family... My father is Hindu, my mother is Muslim, [my father and mother's] children are Christians". Another Christian participant in the young male group also said, "I am from a *Pancasila* background too. [My] extended family consists of Christians, Catholics and Muslims".

Relations between Muslims and Christians are good

When speaking about their family backgrounds and thus about themselves, the participants not only speak about relatives, but also about Muslim and Christian neighbors in Solo who live in "harmony" and "tolerance". An elderly Christian female participant mentioned that "harmony is very strong in the middle and lower classes of society". Another Christian participant in the same group described a moment when she invited her Muslim neighbor to come to a Christian peace-meal (*slametan*) in her house. She said that she informed her neighbor, "I will be praying from ten to eleven o'clock. Please come at ten or after the praying. [My neighbor replied] It is okay for me. I'll come at ten o'clock and join in by just sitting down". A Muslim participant describes a similar case. He said that "in Solo [the relations] between Muslims and Christians are good, extremely good. For instance after the fasting month, the Christians prepare the breaking of the fast with enthusiasm. So tolerance is very high." The speaker uses over-wording ("good, extremely good") to emphasize tolerance between Muslims and Christians.

Plenty of examples of Muslim-Christian cooperation in religious celebrations exist. A Muslim participant mentioned "*idul adha* (feast of the sacrifice). Without being asked or invited, they [non-Muslims] help [Muslims] in the mosque ... At Christmas time, usually non-Muslims ask Muslims to help cook the food". Similarly another Muslim said, "Yesterday, there was a Christian who joined in the slaughter

of an animal [in *idul adha*] from beginning to end, and stayed until the distribution [of the animal meat]." A Christian said "[the population] in my place is diverse, but the harmony among people is also very good. When the *halal bi halal* [Muslim feast day] is held, the village members, both Muslim and non-Muslim, will come". Another Christian participant mentioned that "in *idul adha,* there was a *rewangan* (working together) in Javanese (culture). I and my family (Christians) were invited... I was very happy, I was happy".

The Christian and Muslim participants also speak about their cooperation in social service. A Christian who is a member of the Javanese Christian Church said, "every year I organize health services. I cooperate with [friends of] young Muslims from Nusukan... The first year there was no response. The second year, we discussed it again and then (we) reached a common understanding. Finally, now it works. Indeed, [the place] is prepared [by Muslims]. [The Muslims say] Sir, please [let it be] held in front of this mosque". Another Muslim participant gave an illustration: "the Javanese Church held a social action in cooperation with a *pesantren* [Islamic boarding school] at Mojo Songo". Both Muslim and Christian speakers describe "social" cooperation between Christian and Muslim institutions such as "the Javanese Christian Church" and "the mosque" or "the Javanese Christian Church" and "the *pesantren*".

Fortunately all are born Muslim

Although our participants describe themselves as "tolerant", "flexible", "pluralist" and "progressive" people, some of them nevertheless say that they are happy and proud to be Muslims or Christians. A female Christian participant said, "My parents were *abangan,* so only Islam/Muslim by ID [identity card] *(Islam KTP)*. Then I [became a Christian] because of education. My kindergarten and the elementary school were Christian [schools] ... When I was in the third level of High School [I] asked to be baptized... Fortunately my parents gave permission". A Muslim female participant said that "*alkhamdulillah* (thank God), we were fortunately born all as Muslims".

(2) Meso level

We speak about identity at meso or institutional level when participants identify at least partially with their religions, and speak as (partial) representatives of their religions.

Islam is peace; Christianity is love

When speaking about their religions, Muslims say that "Islam is a religion of peace" and Christians say that "Christianity is a religion of love". A female Muslim participant said that "the meaning of the word Islam is *salam* and *salam* means peace *(selamat)*. So, actually (Islam) teaches beautifulness". A Muslim male participant also remarked that "in Islam, we have a concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (a mercy to the worlds). Thus according to Islam, Islam is mercy for all creatures".

In the same vein, a female Christian participant said that "the foundation (of Christianity) is love *(kasih)*. Love your God with your heart totally and love others as yourself". That is why a Christian participant said that "the Muslim is (our) brother/sister... So, [we] treat our Muslim brother/sister as we treat ourselves. If [you are] pinched [you] will hurt, [so] do not pinch [others]." A male Christian participant mentioned that "all religions have the same human values". In the Christian participant's utterance, the alternative wording of the words *rahmat* (mercy) is love *(kasih)*.

Religions of the earth, religions of heaven

When speaking about Christianity and Islam the participants say that they are "religions of heaven" which means that they are "revealed by God". This is a common ground between Christianity and Islam. The "religions of heaven" are contrasted with "religion of the earth", i.e. those "created by human beings". There is a practical classification at work here.

An elderly Muslim female participant said that "according to Islam, there are religions revealed by Allah to the prophets. [They are] called the religions of heaven *(agama samawi)*... The religions that are revealed by Allah are Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Each of them has the holy Book and the prophet ... Those religions outside these three religions are not the religions of heaven, (but) the religions of earth *(agama ardhi)*. Those religions are created by humans". Thus, says the speaker, "the religions of heaven" namely Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are "revealed by Allah", whereas the religions of earth are human creations.

There are sects in Islam and in Christianity

The adjectives "peaceful" and "heavenly" notwithstanding, some participants immediately add "but" – there are restrictions. There are divisions within Islam and within Christianity.

Some participants classify "nominal", "devout" and "fanatic Muslims". A Muslim participant said that "within Islam, there is Islam *abangan* [nominal], fanatic Islam, and Islam *santri* [devout]". Another Muslim participant said, "those of the fanatic [type of Islam], are those who wear short trousers or large *jilbab*, and refuse to sit with people of a different religion". Another Muslim participant said that "those who are not fanatic Christians, maintain cooperation [with Muslims]." A Christian participant said, "religious followers of all religions, if they are not too fanatic, segregating this and that, [would] respect and appreciate [each other]". Thus participants describe fanatic Muslims as those who dress differently and refuse to sit with those of other religions. Fanatic Christians refuse to cooperate with Muslims, while fanatic Muslims favor segregation. The phrase "too fanatic" is an over-wording.

A Christian male participant who is a member of the Javanese Christian Church said, "there are sects in Islam, but also in Christianity. The sect of Pentecost... stimulates people to fly high [rouse]". A young female Christian participant said that the liturgy in the charismatic church "is like that in the discotheque – noisy, like a concert". Another Christian participant who is also a member of the Javanese Christian Church gave this example: "Sometimes a group of Mormons come to [my] house ... [They ask] Brother, please worship with me! Your Christianity is wrong. They want to correct [my faith]." Another Christian participant in the same focus group discussion said "[we] communicate easier with Muslims who are nationalist... But nowadays there is the LDII [Indonesia Islamic Dakwah Institution]". Thus she classifies "nationalist" and "LDII" Muslims. Another Muslim was described as "... a (Muslim) person. Previously his Islam is common Islam... then he joined the MTA" [Qur'anic Exegesis Council]". A Muslim participant said,

> There is a group [in Islam] which says that he/she who has a different way of worship [though he/she is a Muslim], who has a different ritual, [he/she] is called as *kafir*... even if it is his/her father. Crazy!

Muhammad is the last prophet, salvation is only through Jesus

Participants of both religions speak of "fanatic", "militant", "puritan" and "extremist" Muslims and Christians who say that the other's religion "is wrong" and who "want to correct" their faith. But they say that these "sects" are "not normal", "not common". They are "too fanatic".

Our participants describe themselves as "devout", "pious", "moderate" and "faithful", which in no way excludes being "tolerant" and "respectful" towards others. However, some of them also make restrictive claims. A Christian participant: "We believe in salvation that is only through the Lord Jesus. Since we are still in the world, our task is to spread that salvation". A Muslim participant said, "each (prophet) has a teaching and his period is limited. Abraham and Moses were far ahead of Prophet Isa. Then [they were] substituted by Prophet Isa. After the Prophet Isa there is the Prophet Muhammad. He is the last prophet".

(3) Macro level

We speak about the macro level or societal dimension when participants speak as citizens of the nation, or as members of an ethnic group.

Since the Reformation, Pancasila is not mentioned
Muslim and Christian participants describe Indonesia primarily as a "*Pancasila* country", one that "respects religious freedom". A young male participant used a metaphor to describe unity in diversity: "If we were a broom made of sticks, *Pancasila* is the string [that keeps them together]". A Muslim participant pointed out that "in *Pancasila*, freedom of religion is much respected... If we really implement *Pancasila*, our tolerance toward other religions will be much stronger".

Nevertheless some participants said that "since the Reformation, *Pancasila* is not mentioned again in societal interaction". A female participant complained that "nowadays *Pancasila* has been lost, step by step". Another participant mentioned that "after the Reformation ... other [new] groups from abroad with all of their diversity... came [to Indonesia]". A Muslim participant noted that "after the Reformation there are groups that are quite militant among Christians. So [according to them], if a Christian is not a militant, [he/she] is not [considered] to be a Christian. [They also] press [others] to become Christian. I think this also happened to Muslims."

New directions come from America and Korea
Some participants speak about influences of globalization. One such influence is the increase of purification movements within Islam and Christianity that come from outside Indonesia. One Muslim participant said that "though these [Muslims] live in Solo, they have [new]

religious teachings which come from the Middle East". And he added, "In Christianity [it is similar], I think. [The new directions] come from America, Korea."

Another Muslim in a different group said, "formerly, Islam was only one stream. Islam was still [close to] Java, to the culture of Java. Then our life was so peaceful. [This is] not the case now. Now life is is more hot [fraught with tensions], even among [people of] the same religion." Thus, formerly Javanese culture was a common ground, making life more peaceful than now. Another Muslim participant said:

> [Someone can see him/herself] primarily as Muslim. For him/her, Java is only the place of birth, the language used in daily life. But there is also a person who sees [him/herself] as Muslim [and] at the same time Javanese. So, I am Muslim but also practicing the teachings of Java. The first [person] above does not practice the values and the culture of Java. He is a Muslim, a puritan Muslim. Java refers only to his daily language [and] place of birth. But there is also a Muslim who is also Javanese. I practice Islam. I also practice the values of Java. However there is (a person) who is more Javanese [then Muslim]. I am Javanese first, Muslim second. That is *kejawen* (Java-*ness*).

Although some participants say that because of globalization there is religious purification, other participants claim that there is a revival of Javanese culture.

> The religious awareness of Indonesians has generally increased. [I] mean, compared to my childhood era ... But I am suspicious. This is a fear ... of the process of globalization. When [we are] unable to cope with that [globalization] ... [we go] to religion, [to] culture. The Javanese culture currently is getting stronger. Now, people are willing to pay to learn the Javanese language. People want to learn how to be an MC (master of ceremony) in Javanese. [They] start to learn Javanese culture in the [Sultan's] palace. This [Javanese language] seemingly is a new symbol for Solo people... On the other side, religiosity also increases... Then (as a consequence) the only way to control people is religion.

To build a Church is extremely difficult

Christian participants talked about the difficulties for Christians to build churches. A female Christian participant complained that "in the village of Banyuanyar, there is no church, not even one in the whole area of the village. [We] want to build a church, [but] it is extremely difficult". Another Christian participant said.

> When [Muslims] in a [certain] region want to build a mosque, seemingly it is very easy. But for the church... to get permission from the state... the process will be very long. So, [for Christians] it is more complicated. In Kota

> Barat, [close to] the pharmacy, there is the Church of God Hope. It could not get permission [to build] until recently.

A Muslim participant in the first group said,

> When the minority [Christian] group wanted to build a house of worship in the majority [Muslim] group area ... the Christians encountered many refusals .... There were no massive riots (or) acts of violence from people of the other faith. Many refusals [toward church building proposals] happen at the village [level].

Whereas the second (Christian) speaker contrasts "very easy" and "very long" to show that for Christians it is "more complicated" to get "permission from the state" to build a Church, the third [Muslim] speaker puts this text in a societal context. He says that getting permission depends on majority versus minority relations, that it does not lead to violence, and that refusals come from the village, not from the state.

The Solo Riot is a social problem

Some participants talked about the Solo riots in 1974, in 1981, and in 1998. A Christian participant said, "Accidentally I was involved [in the] 1981 riot ... No curses were used that slandered religion. Not at all ... [The curses were about] China, China, basically it was all about China, without mentioning religion". This speaker said that the 1981 riots were "based on ethnicity", not "based on religion".

The same person said, "I also witnessed the 1974 riot... It was not about religion. It was about an Arabian versus a pedicab. As evidence, he added

> The strongest symbols of religions are their houses of worship. These are their symbols. For Muslims it is the mosque, for Christians and Catholics the churches, and for Buddhists *vihara*. In fact, there was no *vihara* destroyed, no church was destroyed. If at a certain level of consciousness [the riots] were related to religion, at least some houses of worship would have been destroyed.

However, a male Muslim professional participant said that, "even though the victims were friends of Chinese descent, of the ethnicity of China, in fact Muslims of Chinese ethnic background were not among the victims". Note that the word "friend" has a high level of politeness. Some participants said that during the riots people wrote labels such as "Muslim", "Java", or "Muslim Java" on banners and hung them in front of their houses to prevent attacks. One of them said,

> The writing was about 'Muslim', 'Java'... The *sarong* displayed [in front of the house], read 'Muslim', 'Java' ... If they were non-Muslim, [it said] only 'Java'. 'Java'! [Others] wrote 'Muslim'!

This participant continued, "[they wrote this] in order not to be considered Chinese". This is why another participant said, "I believe that economics is the main motive, the economic distribution issue, the problem of power access. Why is it easier for the Chinese to develop their businesses while the non-Chinese find it more difficult? Because of this, the Chinese were eradicated".

Thus, the participants give various interpretations of the Solo Riots. Whereas some said that they were not "based on religion", others said that "Muslims of Chinese ethnic background were not among the victims" and therefore people were said to put banners in front of their houses which read "Muslim", "Java", or "Muslim Java". A Muslim participant in the same group responded to the Christian speaker by saying, "those [who were] involved in the riots, quote unquote, were Muslims. If people wrote Islam [on a banner in front of their house] it was because they did not want to be attacked... The [word Islam] was just attached. But we cannot say that it was purely a religious conflict. I believe the strongest trigger is the economy and the power motive". A Christian participant replied, "if [you say that] the motive is the economy, I clearly agree, because during these years ... our Chinese brothers/sisters were rather arrogant, rather arrogant, arrogant. (They) did not get along [with others] ... But since the Reformation those brothers/sisters of Chinese descent have been aware of that". In the phrase "we cannot say that it was purely a religious conflict", the words "not purely" show that the religious element was not completely absent in the conflict. By repeating the word "arrogant" three times the speaker emphasizes that it was this attitude (arrogance) of the Chinese which caused trouble, but by adding "brothers/sisters" he phrases his complaint in a friendly and polite way.

Problems come from outside Solo

Some participants say that the problems come from outside Solo. A Christian participant said that "[those who] attack houses of worship, ironically, [they are] from outside. In several experiences, [they are] from outside. It could be, for instance, that I am Christian [while] my neighbors are Muslims. The protestors should be my neighbors from my place. But they are not [the local people]. My experience proves

that [the protestors are] from outside. And the way they look and dress shows that they are not people from this place".

Similarly, some participants say that those who caused the 1998 riots were "not from Solo", but "from Jakarta". A Christian participant mentioned, that "if people of Jakarta did not have the will [to riot], Solo would be safe ... Unfortunately, Solo became their object". This participant added "Solo became a target, sometimes called a short fuse / *sumbu pendek* (of conflict). The phrase 'short axis' is used by Jakarta people".

In the same vein, a Muslim participant objected to a statement saying that Ba'ashir was from Solo: "[my colleague mentioned that the people] of Solo such as Abu Bakar Ba'ashir are hardliners... [I said to him] Father! [You] do not know the map. Abu Bakar Ba'ashir is not a person of Solo, [he is from] Sukoharjo". In this way, the participants describe a pattern: the actor or the cause of conflict is "from outside", not "from Solo".

Brotherhood of humanity

Last but not least, Muslim and Christian participants classify various brotherhoods. A Muslim participant said that "the brotherhood of humanity (*ukhuwah bashariah)* is a brotherhood of all human beings ... The brotherhood of the nation *(ukhuwah wathaniyah*) is a brotherhood of all citizens of the nation. Regardless what his/her religion is, it is a brotherhood of citizens. There is another (brotherhood) that is the brotherhood of Islam (*ukhuwah Islamiyah*) which is a brotherhood of Muslims". A female Christian participant said, "Christians are brothers/sisters of the same faith, (but) non-Christians are brothers/sisters of different faith(s)". The phrase "the brotherhood of Muslims" for the Muslim is the equivalent of "the brotherhood of the same faith" for Christians.

2. Analysis of discursive and social practice

The second and the third method are interpretation and explanation. Although Fairclough sees them as different steps, he sometimes treats them together.[12] When participants produce (communicate) and consume (interpret) texts they draw on their "cognitive apparatus" or "members' resources" stored in their long-term memory.[13] These re-

[12] Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power*, Harlow 2001, 117-139.

[13] Fairclough, *Language and Power*, 118 and 133.

sources are cognitive in the sense that they are in people's heads; they are social in the sense that they are socially constructed.[14] When participants draw on their mental models, these models are reproduced or transformed.[15] For the purpose of this contribution we look at ideational and relational transformations, particulary concerning subject positions or social identities.

(1) Micro level

Discursive practice
When speaking about themselves and others as "flexible" people who have "friendly" relations with each other, the participants draw upon personal experiences with relatives and neighbors, in their family and in their neighborhood. We have seen various examples of these experiences in the previous section and there is no need to repeat them here except to point out that in describing these experiences respondents use identity labels and mental models that are taken from the political arena. For example, if participants say that they come from a "*Pancasila* family", they draw upon the typical Indonesian ideology of national unity in diversity. If they say, I come from a "democratic family" they draw upon the mental map of a constitutional state in which all citizens are equal according to the law of the country.

Social practice
At micro level most participants position themselves and others as "pluralist", or "democratic" people who are "tolerant" and "respectful" to others. This does not prevent them from positioning themselves also as devout and pious believers who are happy to belong to the religion they belong to. They distinguish themselves from hard-liners and "puritans" who are "crazy" and who are "not from here".

(2) Meso level

Discursive practice
Participants justify their flexibility and that of their respective religions by drawing upon the sacred scriptures, the Qur'an and the Bible. A Christian participant justified the statement that "the Muslim is our brother/sister" by drawing on the two commandments in the Gospels. "You must love your God with all your heart", and, "Love your

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[14] Op. cit., 20.
[15] Op. cit., 158-161.

neighbor as yourself". A Muslim justified her respect for Christians by drawing on the Qur'an, saying that "the religions of heaven", Judaism, Christianity and Islam, "are revealed by Allah".

Participants also describe the limits of tolerance by drawing upon the sacred scriptures. A Muslim participant said, that "on the issue of *aqida* (faith), the Qur'an [Sura 109: 6] says *lakum dinukum wa liyadin* (to you be your religion, and to me my religion)". By doing so, the speaker points to the pitfall of mixing Islamic and Christian faith or teaching which breaks the rule of "*aqida*". An elderly male Muslim refers to the concept of religious pluralism. "Nowadays we are trapped by [the concept of] religious pluralism, Sir! It is dangerous. When a person does not have the correct belief, it would be a source of disaster". In the same way, a Christian refers to the evangelical principle that "salvation is only through the Lord Jesus".

Another participant refers to the prohibition against Muslims wishing Christians "Merry Christmas". He says "in the past, saying Merry Christmas to your neighbors was no problem. [But] after reading [a book claiming] that the Merry Christmas greeting is prohibited *(haram)*, Muslims do not wish [Christians] Merry Christmas [at Christmas time]". Similar ideas are expressed in books such as "*Hari-Hari Nasrani* (The Christian Days)" written by Al-Ghamidhi, who says that "the greeting Merry Christmas or Happy New Year (or other seasonal days of infidel) is *haram* (prohibited) ... because indirectly we recognize their submission toward the cross".

Whether Muslims may wish Christians Merry Christmas is the subject of a lively debate among Muslim clerics and scholars in Indonesian public discourse. In 1981 the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) issued a decree *(fatwa)* for Muslims on the prohibition to participate in Christmas celebrations and to give Merry Christmas greetings. H.M. Dian Nafi, however, wrote a popular article in Solopos newspaper of 23 December 1998 concerning the "law about wishing Merry Christmas". He said that saying "Merry Christmas" is okay because it is a social custum and not a recognition of Christian faith. The question whether or not Muslims are permitted to use the greeting "Merry Christmas" always reemerges in the public discourse especially as Christmas day approaches. The speaker refers to that public discourse.

Muslim participants also draw upon the teachings of the two largest Muslim organizations in Indonesia. We started this contribution with the participant referring to Muhammadiyah puritanism. We also quoted an elderly Muslim participant who referred to the three broth-

erhoods, "the brotherhood of humanity (*ukhuwah bashariah)*; the brotherhood of nation *(ukhuwah wathaniyah*); the brotherhood of Muslim (*ukhuwah Islamiyah*)". This is typical *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) teaching. It was first popularized by K.H. Ahmad Shiddiq, the former Rais Aam (General Leader) of the Central Body of NU, when he gave a speech at the Muktamar (the Highest Conference) in Krapyak Yogyakarta in 1989. The teaching of three brotherhoods is also written in the NU organizational guidance book, *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah* (*Aswaja)*.

Social practice
At meso level, most participants represent Islam and Christianity as "peaceful" and "love-minded" religions. They nevertheless reproduce for both religions the image of "sects" that bring disharmony and chaos. These "puritans" bring "divisions" among people and among believers, even within one and the same religion. The label "kafir" is used for those who do not follow the will of Allah.

(3) Macro level

Discursive practice
At micro level we saw participants referring to their background in a "*Pancasila* family". *Pancasila* is part of the preamble of the Constitution and one of four pillars of the Indonesian ideology of national unity. It does not have a connection with the family. Thus by applying the *Pancasila* notion to family life they say that they appreciate diversity in the family.

The phrase "*Pancasila* family" has become popular in public discourse. A girl named Adearin, who identifies herself as a Muslima, posts a rather long article on her personal website with the title "the Family of *Pancasila (Keluarga Pancasila)*". It speaks about her extended family in Purworejo, Central Java, which consists of Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, and Catholics, all living in harmony. Rachmanto Widjopranoto wrote a book as well, entitled "The Pattern of Developing the *Pancasila* Family *(Pola Pengembangan Keluarga Pancasila)*", generated by his research in a village of Bantul Yogyakarta. Widjopranoto uses the term *Pancasila* family to refer to a family whose members follow different faiths but who live in harmony with each other.

When speaking about the difficulties they face in building Churches, Christians implicitly refer to the Regulation on Houses of Worship, jointly promulgated by the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minster of Home Affairs on 21 March 2006, replacing an earlier Regulation dated 13 September 1969. The Regulation stipulates that permission to build a house of worship is granted on four conditions: production of a list of names of 90 users of the building with copies of their identity cards; a list of at least 60 local people who support the building of the house; a written recommendation from the Religious Affairs office of the city or district; and a written recommendation from a *Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama* (Forum for Harmony among Religious People). The Forum must represent the religious communities present in the area where the house is to be built and is assisted by government officials. This shows the close involvement of the national government. A Christian participant said "it was not noted in the history that people of different religions do not have good relations in Solo". He referred to a study of conflicts in Solo written by the historian Mr. Dharmono. "There was no conflict based on religion. But conflicts based on ethnicity happened many times".

Social practice

At macro level most participants reproduce the image of Indonesia as a "*Pancasila* country", where the principle of "unity in diversity" rules everyday life. They nevertheless identify transformations that have occurred since the Reformation, namely the increase of "Javanese culture" on the one hand and the increase of "religious awareness" on the other. One participant explains that these developments are responses to "the process of globalization" and are "caused by fear" of it. The participant provides as evidence that the "Javanese culture gets stronger" because "people are willing to pay to learn Javanese language". In addition he describes the increase of "religious awareness", which makes religion "the only way to control people". The increase of "Javanese culture" and the increase of "religious awareness" are responses to the "process of globalization and "are caused by fear".

Conclusion

In our research we wanted to discover whether and why people elevate their religious identities over other, e.g. ethnic, national, economic or gender identities; and whether or not this leads to social conflict.

Our participants describe themselves as faithful believers.' But this does not prevent them from respecting others, as Indonesians and Javanese, or simply as human beings. The NU metaphor of three brotherhoods is telling for multiple identities.

Participants derive their personal identities from social identities that are shared by the members of a group. In this sense we agree with the social identity theory. But contrary to the social identity theory of in-group favoritism, we noted a strong tendency to maintain harmony and avoid conflict by distinguishing themselves from people "outside Solo" and "new waves" of Christianity and Islam.

Of course, a case study such as ours is not representative in the statistical sense of the word. We had no access to "hardliners" or "puritans" although some of their voices were heard in our group discussions, and we must take a certain amount of social desirability and face saving into account. But our findings are more or less confirmed by large-scale studies such as the World Values Surveys and Gallup Polls.

In principle social identity acknowledges that an individual is a member of numerous social groups,[16] but it would be hard to conceptualize that the person identifies with these simultaneously. In experiments conducted by social identity theorists, individuals are classified as members of two non-overlapping groups.[17] But in real life, people are always members of more than one group. This is why identification is more complex, as Tajfel admits.[18] Our study confirms that friendship with out-group members exists.[19] An issue for futher research would be the relation between 'social identity' theory and 'multiple identity' or 'polyphonic self' ('dialogical self') theory.[20]

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[16] Tajfel, *Social categorization*, 61.

[17] Tajfel and Turner, *The Social Identity Theory*, 13.

[18] Tajfel, *Social Categorization*, 63. Cf. Stuart Hall, Minimal Selves, in: Houston A. Baker Jr. et al. (eds), *Black British Cultural Studies. A Reader*, Chicago and London 1996, 114-119.

[19] Cf. Hubert Hermans and Agnieszka Hermans-Konopka, *Dialogical Self Theory. Positioning and Counter-Positioning in a Globalizing Society*, Cambridge 2010, 68-70.

[20] Cf. Hermans and Hermans-Konopka, *Dialogical Self Theory*, 74f. Cf. Hubert Hermans and Thorsten Gieser (eds), *Handbook of Dialogical Self Theory*, Cambridge 2012.

Religious Education in Religiously Affiliated Schools and the Influence of the State and Religious Community on School Politics

Mohamad Yusuf and *Carl Sterkens*

One of the most important outcomes of the Indonesian *reformasi* process following the resignation of President Suharto in 1998 was the decentralization of power over a wide variety of issues. Among others, decentralization resulted in more freedom for religious communities to manage their own institutions, to more openness about their religious and ideological foundations, and – more specifically – to more autonomy for religious communities to organize religious education.[1] However, the Government Regulation No. 19/2005 on the National Education Standard requires all education institutions to comply with a national standard, including standards for curriculum and educators, as well as requirements for financial transparency. Thus, on the one hand, schools have increased autonomy to regulate themselves independently. On the other hand, they must comply with national standards. In the daily lives of religiously affiliated schools, there are two actors who influence religious education: the State and the respective religious communities backing the religiously affiliated schools. How do these two actors exercise their powers? Which power has more influence over the formation of school policies for religious education? How do school managers and teachers deal with tensions in cases of conflicting expectations of the State and the religious communi-

[1] Christopher Bjork, Decentralisation in Education, Institutional Culture and Teacher Autonomy in Indonesia, in: *International Review of Education* 50, 2004, 245-262.

ties? This article addresses these questions with regard to religious education in religiously affiliated secondary schools in Indonesia.[2]

We introduce this discussion in this book, because government and religious institutions influence the policies of religious education in semi-public and public spheres. Religious education in its turn is a major factor in religious identity formation.[3] Next to family and peers, religious communities and educational communities are generally acknowledged as the principal agents of religious socialization.[4] Policies of religious education consequently influence religious identity formation. What kind of religious identity is enhanced by religious education? And are there any differences between Muslim, Christian and Hindu schools? Do Muslim schools in Indonesia foster religious identity more than Christian or Hindu schools as generally supposed? And if they do, in what sense? Does the Indonesian government (indirectly) favor Islamic religious communities, as is often said?[5] In this article, we will introduce different models of religious education that have been adopted by Muslim, Christian and Hindu schools in Indonesia. We will describe the educational goals, teaching methods and curriculum content, as well as the opinions of teachers and headmasters concerning religious education. Next, we examine the institutional influence of State and religious communities on religious education in these schools. We will address the following questions:

1. (a) What type of religious education is implemented by religiously affiliated schools as shown in their teaching goals, methods and curriculum content? (b) Are there major differences between Muslim, Christian and Hindu schools in Indonesia in the preferred model of religious education? (c) Does the fact that a school belongs

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[2] This study distinguishes religious schools whose curriculum explicitly aims at religious socialization, such as Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and seminaries, from religiously affiliated schools. Religiously affiliated schools in our study, refer to private schools with affiliations with certain religious communities. These schools use the national curriculum as State schools do, but they also refer to teachings of their religious community in religious education.

[3] Hans-Georg Ziebertz and Ulrich Riegel (eds). *How Teachers in Europe Teach Religion. An International Empirical Studies in 16 Countries*, Berlin 2009; Robert Jackson (ed.), *International Perspectives on Citizenship, Education and Religious Diversity*, London 2003; Fallona, *Manner in Teaching. A Study in Observing and Interpreting Teachers' Moral Virtues*, in: *Teaching and Teacher Education 16*, 2000, 681-695.

[4] Roberta Berns, *Child, Family, School, Community: Socialization and Support*, 8th edition, California 2003.

[5] Moch Nur Ichwan, *Official Reform of Islam. State Islam and the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Contemporary Indonesia 1966-2004*, Tilburg 2006.

to a religious majority or minority affect which type of religious education is chosen?

2. (a) What is the influence of the State and religious communities on school policies for religious education through application of normative, coercive and utilitarian power? (b) Do differences in the relative group size of the religious groups involved (majority / minority) influence the powers exercised by the State and religious communities, and the responses of the schools towards these institutional powers?

These research questions will be answered with the help of two theoretical frameworks. With regard to the first series of questions, we distinguish three types of religious education: mono-religious, multi-religious and inter-religious education. The second group of questions will be analyzed using Etzioni's theory of different types of organizations based on different types of power exercised: normative, coercive and utilitarian power.

1. Theoretical frameworks

Types of religious education

We distinguish between mono-religious, multi-religious and inter-religious models of religious education based on the differences in cognitive, affective and attitudinal aspects in these models of religious education.[6]

Cognitively, the mono-religious model provides the knowledge of, and insight into, a person's own religion. Although this model focuses primarily on one religion, it does not necessarily imply complete disregard of other religions. Other religions might be discussed from the perspective one's own tradition, aiming at affirming the own religious tradition. The mono-religious model is also known as the transmission model, because it aims to transmit a particular religious tradition. Affectively, the mono-religious model aims at increasing students' interest and involvement in a particular religion. As for the attitudinal aspect, this model is meant to inculcate a motivation to participate in religious practices. Through religious education students can grow deeper in their faith and in their sense of belonging to a specific

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[6] Carl Sterkens, *Interreligious Learning. The Problem of Interreligious Dialogue in Primary Education*, Leiden etc. 2001; Cf. Carl Sterkens, Changes in Commitment and Religiocentrism through Interreligious Learning. Empirical Results from a Social Constructionist Perspective, in: Didier Pollefeyt (ed.), *Interreligious Learning*, Louvain 2007, 129-161.

religious community. The theological basis for this model is the claim to absolute truth of a certain religion. This truth claim has two variations: exclusivism and inclusivism. Exclusivism perceives that other religions will be positively evaluated only if these other religions show similarities with the own religion, as their own religion is the only religion that can claim truth. Inclusivism evaluates other religions positively as long as they display signs of divine revelation, and the other religions mediate salvation through general grace.

The multi-religious model underlies the need to deal with religious plurality. This model aims at introducing students to many religions. There is a strong emphasis on providing information about religions in conjunction with other subjects in the school's curriculum (history, geography, language, etc). Verifiable information about the religious traditions is stressed, and religious convictions are presented in their own terms. As a consequence, this model of education presents different religions in an objective and comparative way, and is not intended as a search for 'religious truth' or 'meaning'. Affectively, the multi-religious model aims to stimulate interest in studying different religions. Attitudinally, it tries to cultivate a respectful attitude towards people from different religions. Respect is the major goal of multi-religious education because the idea is to help students learn to coexist peacefully in a plural environment.

The inter-religious model focuses on dialogue between adherents of different religions. This model seeks to express the uniqueness of each religious tradition, and at the same time to evaluate religious plurality in a positive way. Affectively, the inter-religious model aims at learning to communicate effectively between one's own religion and other religious traditions. Attitudinally, this model stimulates dialogue between religions. In a dialogue, the participants learn to adopt the perspectives of each of the various religious traditions. In such a dialogue students engage the own and other religions from both auto- and allo-perspectives.[7] The theological basis of this model is known as pluralism, which searches for a way to be committed to one's own religion while recognizing religious plurality. This model implies the desire to speak from a wealth of personal religious experience and to testify to the values and truths one has discovered in one's own religious tradition, while at the same time striving to understand other

[7] Sterkens, *Interreligious Learning*; Volker Küster, *Einführung in die Interkulturelle Theologie*, Göttingen 2011.

religious traditions in terms of their own premises, and processing critical self-reflection.[8]

Institutional influences on the policies of religious education

Our second theoretical framework deals with the way the policies of religious education are implemented in schools. We apply a theory proposed by Etzioni on a comparative analysis of complex organizations. Etzioni introduces the concepts of control and compliance as major elements of relationships in organizations between those who have power (power holders) and those over whom they exercise it (subordinates). Control is a process by which organization members are socialized and oriented towards the power exercised by power holders. It is not simply a question of controlling those who falter, but is a continuous process of socialization, orientation and restatement of goals. Compliance is "[...] the relation in which an actor behaves in accordance with a directive supported by another actor's power and to the orientation of the subordinated actor to the power applied".[9] Compliance refers to the obedience of a member of an organization and the reasons for this obedience. It is the result of two factors operating within organizations: the orientation of members towards the organization power system (their involvement), and the means available to power holders for the exercise of their power.

In our study, the State and the religious communities are considered to be power holders for religiously affiliated schools. The State has the power to control school policies under the National Education System, including the policies for religious education in religiously affiliated schools. Government Regulation No. 55/2007, Article 7.2 stipulates that: "Every school that does not comply with religious education as mentioned in article 3.1, article 4 (2 until 7), and article 5.1 will be subject to administrative sanctions ranging from reprimand through closure after first being trained/guided by the national government or local governments."[10] Religious communities also act as

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[8] Hanz-Georg Ziebertz, A Move to Multi? Empirical Research Concerning the Attitudes of Youth Towards Pluralism and Religion's Claims of Truth, in: Didier Pollefeyt, *Interreligious Learning*, Louvain 2007, 3-24.

[9] Amitai Etzioni, *Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations*, Glencoe Ill. 1961, 4; cf. Amitai Etzioni, *Modern Organizations*, New Jersey 1964; Roger Millham et al., Social Control in Organization, in: *The British Journal of Sociology* 23, 1972, 406-421.

[10] Our translation of: "Satuan pendidikan yang tidak menyelenggarakan pendidikan agama sesuai dengan ketentuan yang dimaksud dalam pasal 3 ayat (1), pasal 4 ayat (2) sampai dengan ayat (7), dan pasal 5 ayat (1) dikenakan sanksi administrative berupa peringatan sampai dengan penutupan setelah diadakan pembinaan /pembimbingan oleh Pemerintah/ atau

power holders because they influence to a certain degree policies of religious education in schools, e.g. through their expectation to socialize students in religious education. The schools, and more specifically the school policies on religious education, are considered as subordinates who are influenced by the external powers of State and religious communities.[11]

Etzioni[12] distinguishes between three types of power as a means used by power holders to control subordinates: normative, coercive and utilitarian power.

Normative power rests on the allocation and manipulation of symbolic rewards and deprivations through allocation of esteem and prestige symbols, administration of rituals, and influence over the distribution of acceptance, acknowledgement and positive response. According to Bourdieu[13] symbolic power is "[...] a power of constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world and, thereby, action on the world and thus the world itself, an almost magical power which enables one to obtain the equivalent of what is obtained through force (whether physical or economic), by virtue of the specific effect of mobilization".

Coercive power deals not only with negative sanctions, but also involves positive sanctions. Baldwin[14] includes both rewards and penalties in his definition of sanction: "[...] if someone is offered a very large reward for compliance, then once his expectations are adjusted to this large reward, he suffers a prospective loss if he does not comply". Although these definitions appear simple enough, Baldwin finds that there are both conceptual and empirical difficulties in distinguish-

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pemerintah daerah". This regulation is confirmed by the Regulation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs 16/2010 article 28.1 mentioning that: "A school that fails to organize religious education mentioned by article 3.1 and article 4 the Government Regulation 55/2007 on the Management of religious education will be subject to administrative sanction such as a. verbal warning; b. three times reprimand; or c. school closure". Our translation of: "Sekolah yang tidak menyelenggarakan Pendidikan Agama sebagaimana dimaksud dalam Pasal 3 ayat (1) dan Pasal 4 Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 55 Tahun 2007 tentang Pendidikan Agama dan Pendidikan Keagamaan, dikenakan sanksi administratif berupa: a. peringatan dalam bentuk teguran lisan; atau b. peringatan tertulis sebanyak 3 (tiga) kali;atau c. penutupan berupa pencabutan izin operasional pendirian".

[11] Hans-Georg Ziebertz and William Kay (eds), *Youth in Europe I. An international empirical Study about Life perspectives*, Münster 2005, 101-120.

[12] Etzioni, Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations; Etzioni, Modern Organizations.

[13] Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, Cambridge 1991, 163.

[14] David Baldwin, The Power of Positive Sanction, in: *World Politics* 24, 1971, 19-38, 24; cf. Peter Blau, *Exchange and Power in Social Life*, New York 2009, 116.

ing between positive and negative sanctions. Etzioni[15] however, refers to coercive power as mainly negative sanctions, such as deprivation, corporal punishment, threat of loss of life. He insists that coercive power is probably only effective when the organization is confronted with highly alienated subordinates.

Utilitarian power is based on control over material resources and rewards through allocation of salaries and wages, commission and contributions, fringe benefits and services. In general, power holders might exercise utilitarian power less frequently in private schools than in state schools because the financial resources of private schools are highly dependent upon student contributions. This makes them financially more independent and less submissive to the influence of external powers due to finances. In some religiously affiliated schools in Indonesia, however, utilitarian power exercised by other institutions is clearly apparent. As part of the national educational system, in which the State is in charge of financial resources to ensure national standards of education, a number of religiously affiliated schools receive financial support from the State. At the same time, these schools are to some extent also dependent on financial support from the religious community to which they belong.

2. Method of semi-structured interview, data collection and selection of interviewees

Our data was collected by fully recorded interviews, conducted between 7 through 26 October 2010. We conducted a qualitative survey (through semi-structured interviews) and defined main topics, dimensions and categories beforehand. For the purposes of the interview, we constructed a topic list consisting of questions in relation to types of religious education, and the response of the schools towards the State regulations and the influence of religious communities. We asked similar questions to all respondents, in order to collect uniform data from headmasters and teachers in different settings. Questions related to the types of religious education, were for instance: "What is the aim of religious education?"; "Do you teach about world religions?" Questions also regarded the response of the schools towards State regulations and the influence of religious communities, for instance: "Do you require teachers to be graduates of a State-acknowledged univer-

[15] Etzioni, *Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations*; cf. Edward Lehman, Toward a Macrosociology of Power, in: *American Sociological Review* 34, 1969, 453-465.

sity?"; "Is the school subject to State inspections regarding the implementation of religious education?"; "What are the consequences if your school does not follow State regulations?"; "What should the aim of religious education be according to the religious community?"; "Should the teacher of religious education be an active and committed member of a religious community?"; "Is there any financial consequence if the teaching of religious education is not in line with the vision and mission of the religious community?"

We selected three provinces in which, respectively, Muslims, Christians and Hindus were in the majority. In each area, we selected five secondary schools (*Sekolah Menengah Atas* or SMA): three schools representing the majority group in the concerned area, and two schools belonging to religious minority groups. Each school is further categorized by different religious denominations or ideological foundations. In these schools, we interviewed the headmasters and teachers of religion. This procedure resulted in the inclusion of fifteen headmasters and nineteen teachers of religious education from fifteen religiously affiliated secondary schools in three provinces in Indonesia.

In West Java, an area of Muslim majority, we selected schools affiliated with the two major Muslim organizations in the country, namely Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, and one school belonging to a so-called new trend of Islamic education that is not specifically affiliated with either of these organizations (al-Azhar school). We further included one Protestant school and one Catholic school representing the religious minority in that area.

In North Sulawesi, an area with a Christian majority, we involved three Christian schools: a Protestant, a Catholic and an Adventist school. The schools belonging to minority groups were represented by two Islamic schools, which were similar in religious ideology to the al-Azhar school in West Java. However, unlike the well-equipped al-Azhar, these two Islamic schools belong to small religious communities and have difficulties securing funding.

In Bali, an area with a Hindu majority, Hindu schools are represented by three Hindu organizations: Dwijendra, Saraswati and Gandhi, representing three different Hindu streams in Bali. Dwijendra is a conservative Hindu organization strongly involved with the local Balinese culture; Saraswati is concerned primarily with issues of education and religious life; and the education in the Gandhi School is inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's doctrines of non-violence and attracts

mainly pupils with a relatively high socio-economic background. The non-Hindu schools in Bali are represented by one Catholic school and one Muhammadiyah Islamic school.

3. Design of analysis

All interviews were done by the primary researcher (Muhammad Yusuf) and fully recorded. Interviews were analyzed using content analysis. When we analyzed the data, we began with listening to and reviewing each interview record three times; the first time for general understanding; the second and third time for identification of useful comments. Important sections or phrases in the interview were written down. We employed three levels of analysis.[16] (1) The first level of data reduction involves selecting, focusing and simplifying the data. This process includes selecting important parts of the data, or sorting or highlighting the data into initial categories. At this stage, the focus is on sorting out important information from unimportant material in the recording. For each interview, we wrote down at what stage of the interview these remarks could be found. (2) In the second level of analysis, we grouped the data into meaningful patterns and themes. At this stage, observations are developed into descriptive and interpretive categories based on the recorded data and the conceptual framework used to guide this research. First, we made connections between selected data from recordings, and the main concepts (and their indicators) that we had defined beforehand. Strauss and Corbin[17] define this stage as conceptualization of the data. This aims to match the selected data with our concepts and to ensure that all data indicated similar purposes directed at advancing main topics and categories we had formulated in advance. Second, we crosschecked the data with direct statements of the interviewees from the recordings. We always returned to the recordings of the interviews, and used the direct statements as main sources of our data analysis. (3) The final stage of the analysis aims to discover the influence of institutions on the policies of religious education of the school, and looks for indications in the interviews whether differences in the relative group size of the religious groups (majority/minority) influences the preference of the schools for a certain model of religious education. We compared results from different schools, both in the same cities and in different

[16] Cf. Grant McCracken. *The Long Interview*. California 1988.
[17] Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research*. California 1998. 126f.

areas, and discussed the influence of powers from the State and religious communities to the practice of religious education in schools.

4. Findings and discussion

We now proceed to the empirical findings of this study. As described earlier, we addressed two research questions: the first is related to the different types of religious education, and the second is about the institutional powers influencing school policies on religious education.

Preferred types of religious education

Our findings indicate that religiously affiliated schools in our study predominantly favor the mono-religious model. For the most part, religious education focuses on one religion only. Religious education aims to provide students with knowledge of their own religion and to facilitate students in practicing their own religious rituals. Students are also expected to behave in accordance with the teaching of their own religion. Even though some Christian schools introduce the teachings of other religions, such as the Protestant school in West Java and Catholic school in Bali, religious education does not approach other religions in terms of their own self-understanding. Only one Catholic school in West Java implements an inter-religious model.[18] In this school, students are introduced to many religions and are taught the skill of starting a dialogue with other religious traditions, i.e., by learning to participate in an exchange of religious perspectives. Even though most schools apply the mono-religious model, there are particular differences, as some schools use specific materials that emphasize specific religious interpretations and practices typical for their religious affiliation.[19]

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[18] A teacher of this Catholic school says: "Through religious education, we stimulate our students to identify the differences between religious traditions among their friends. Students should understand that their religion is different from their friends' and from this, we invite our students to communicate with each other and to create dialogue among friends with different religious backgrounds." Our translation of: "*Melalui pendidikan agama, kami ingin mengajarkan pada siswa agar mengetahui dan mau mempelajari bahwa ajaran agama itu tidak sama. Para siswa harus memahami bahwa ajaran agamanya berbeda dengan agama temannya yang lain, dan kemudian kami mengajak siswa untuk berdialog dengan teman yang berlainan agama itu.*"

[19] Unlike the Christian and Hindu schools that mainly carry out religious education for two hours credit (i.e. 80 minutes per week), all Islamic schools provide six to eight hours credit for Islamic religious education (i.e. 240-320 minutes per week). An additional hour credit is used to introduce teachings of the specific religious community, such as *Kemuhammadiyahan* in the Muhammadiyah schools and *KeNUan* in the Wahid Hasyim school affiliated with

There is a major difference between Muslim, Christian and Hindu schools. All Islamic schools in our study, regardless of their location in the majority or minority context, teach exclusively about Islam. Not teaching about other religions seems to be related to the endorsement of their religious identity.[20] Five Christian schools apply the mono-religious model: three schools located in the area with a Christian majority (i.e. North Sulawesi) do not introduce other religions than Christianity; one Christian school in West Java introduces other religious traditions as well, but from a Christian perspective; and one Christian school in Bali introduces other religious traditions in its Christian religious education from a Christian perspective, but also provides Islamic religious education for Muslim students and Hindu religious education for Hindus.[21] All Hindu schools in our study apply the mono-religious model. All Hindu schools provide Islamic religious education for Muslims and Christian religious education for Christians.[22]

Institutional influences on school policies of religious education

This subsection is divided into two parts: the influence of the State and the influence of the religious communities. For each institution, we discuss the (potential) powers exercised and the responses of schools.

Nahdlatul Ulama. The Ministry of Religious Affairs Regulation 1/2010 article 7.3 stipulates that: "Schools can complement the religious education curriculum in the form of additions and/or deepening of the material, and additional class hours as needed." The Indonesian document says: "*Sekolah dapat menambah muatan kurikulum pendidikan agama berupa penambahan dan atau pendalaman materi, serta penambahan jam pelajaran sesuai kebutuhan.*"

[20] The headmaster of the Al-Azhar school testifies: "We belong to an Islamic institution, which aims to promote Islamic values among our students. Because Islamic teaching is very broad and none of our students would be able to comprehend it completely, there is no reason to learn any other religion than Islam." Our translation of: "*Sekolah kami ini milik lembaga Islam, yang tujuan utamanya untuk syi'ar Islam. Ajaran Islam itu sangat luas dan sudah mencakup segala hal, sehingga tidak perlu untuk mengajarkan siswa tentang agama yang lain.*

[21] The headmaster of the Catholic school in Bali mentions: "We have to be tolerant towards students from other religious backgrounds, that is by giving them the opportunity to acquire religious education in accordance to their own religion." Our translation of: "*Kita harus toleran terhadap siswa yang beragama lain, caranya, yaitu dengan memberikan kesempatan kepada mereka untuk memperoleh pendidikan agama yang sesuai dengan agamanya.*"

[22] The headmaster of the Dwijendra Hindu school, for instance, says: "It is a basic right that students receive religious education in accordance with their own religion. Students must understand their own religion and practice their own religious rituals." Our translation of: "*Ini adalah hal yang paling mendasar bagi siswa bahwa mereka berhak untuk memperoleh pendidikan agama sesuai dengan agamanya. Siswa harus paham ajaran agamanya dan melaksanakan yang diperintahkan agamanya.*"

(1) The State

The Law on the National Education System of 2003 (Law No. 20/2003) requires that students receive religious education in accordance with their own religion and taught by a teacher professing the same religion (Article 12).[23] In addition, Article 30.2 of Law No. 20/2003 underlines that religious education "[...] has the function to prepare learners to become community members who understand and practice religious values and/or acquire expertise in study of his/her own religion".[24] Referring to our theoretical framework, these two articles of Law 20/2003 mandate the implementation of the mono-religious model of religious education. Before we discuss the State's influence on policies for religious education in schools, we introduce the State's potential powers to influence policies for religious education in the schools.

a. The potential power of the State in influencing schools' policies

The normative power of the State is executed primarily through a national accreditation program of the National Accreditation Body (BAN or *Badan Akreditasi Nasional*). The BAN falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture (*Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*) and makes quality assessments and evaluations according to national standards set under Law No. 20/2003 every four years. Nationally accredited schools secure positive acknowledgment and thus prestige. The State further exercises its normative power in this accreditation in two ways: the qualification of teachers and the development of curriculum and textbooks for religious education. The government requires all teachers, including teachers of religious education, to be graduates of State-accredited universities.[25] In addition, schools must use a national curriculum for

[23] Article 12.1.a of Law No. 20/2003 mandates that "Every student in an educational unit is entitled to receive religious education in accordance with his/her religion, imparted by an educator of the same religion." Our translation of: "*Setiap peserta didik pada setiap satuan pendidikan berhak mendapatkan pendidikan agama sesuai dengan agama yang dianutnya dan diajarkan oleh pendidik yang seagama.*"

[24] Our translation of: "Pendidikan keagamaan berfungsi mempersiapkan peserta didik menjadi anggota masyarakat yang memahami dan mengamalkan nilai-nilai ajaran agamanya dan/atau menjadi ahli ilmu agama."

[25] The Ministry of Religious Affairs Regulation 16/2010 on the Management of Religious Education stipulates in article 13: "Teachers of religious education should have a minimum academic qualification on the level of a bachelor degree [Strata I or Diploma IV] from a religious education program and/or a religious studies program from an accredited University, and should have a professional certificate for teacher of religious education." Our translation of: "*Guru Pendidikan Agama minimal memiliki kualifikasi akademik Strata I/Diploma IV,*

religious education developed by the Curriculum Center of the Ministry of Education and Culture, and use the textbooks produced by State-appointed institutions. This Curriculum Center is responsible for the formulation of a national standard for every subject taught in schools, including religious education. The Ministry of Religious Affairs (*Kementerian Agama*) appoints representatives from religious communities at the national level to develop textbooks for religious education. The textbook for Islamic religious education is published by the Directorate General of Islamic Education of the Department of Religious Affairs; the textbook for religious education used in Protestant schools is developed by the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI or *Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia*); the textbook for Catholic religious education is developed by the Bishop's Conference of Indonesia (KWI or *Konferensi Wali Gereja Indonesia*); the textbook of Hindu religious education is published by Hindu Dharma Indonesia (*Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia*). All these organizations are not subject to or part of a government institution, except for the Directorate General of Islamic Education of the Department of Religious Affairs. However, they are all expected to conform to the national curriculum for religious education developed by the government's Curriculum Center.

The State applies its coercive power in two ways: administrative control and centralized examinations. Representatives of the Department of Religious Affairs (*Departemen Agama*) in each city regularly inspect religious education in the classroom and examine whether the school fulfills quality requirements, including the use of recognized textbooks, the availability of teaching facilities, etc. In addition, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (*Kementerian Agama*) administers a centralized State exam.[26] The Manual of the Implementation of Examination (*Pedoman Pelaksanaan Ujian Keagamaan*) stipulates that the Ministry of Religious Affairs at the national level develops 25 percent

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dari program studi pendidikan agama dan/atau program studi agama dari Perguruan Tinggi yang terakreditasi dan memiliki sertifikat profesi guru pendidikan agama."

[26] There has been a huge debate over whether the subject of religious education should be tested on the national level similar to three other subjects, namely math, Indonesian language and English. This idea is supported by the Minister of Religious Affairs, Mr. Suryadharma Ali, but rejected by the Minister of National Education, Mr. Muhammad Nuh. At the moment, the tests on religious education are a combination of questions produced at national level and district level. For this debate, see http://www.republika.co.id/berita/pendidikan/berita/10/12/21/153414-kemdiknas-pelajaran-agama-tidak-akan-masuk-un-tahun-depan, accessed 15 November 2013.

of the exam questions, while 75 percent of the questions are formulated by representatives of the Departments of Religious Affairs at district level in collaboration with school teachers.[27] This procedure allows local considerations to be taken into account. The grades on this centralized examination does not only determine whether individual students pass to a higher class or not, but also influences the number of 'credits' a school receives in the framework of the State accreditation program. The better the scores of students on this centralized examination, the more 'credits' a school will earn for the State accreditation program.

The utilitarian power of the State is exercised primarily through financial support for certified teachers and scholarships for students in lower economic strata. In order to secure financial assistance, teachers must participate in the national certification program of the Ministry of Education. According to article 16 Law No. 14/2005 regulating teachers and lecturers, "(1) the government shall provide professional incentives referred to in article 15.1 to teachers with a professional teacher certificate if they are hired by education institutions and/or by education institutions run by communities. (2) The Government incentives referring to article (1) equals to one month salary."[28] In addition, students from lower economic backgrounds are entitled to receive financial support from the Ministry of Education and Culture under a special program called the School Operational Support for High School Students (BOS-SMA or *Bantuan Operasional Sekolah SMA*). These students receive Rp. 10,000 per month for living allowance in addition to money for their monthly tuition fees.[29] Schools should

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[27] The Manual says: "The coordinator of the State exam at the State level is responsible for [...] 25% of the anchor items." Our translation of: "*Penyelenggara USBN-PAI Tingkat Pusat bertanggung jawab untuk [...] menyusun dan menetapkan 25% butir soal (anchor item) USBN-PAI*" (Point III.1). And further: "The coordinator of the State exam at the district level is responsible for [...] 75% of the items for the exam." Our translation of: "*Penyelenggara USBN-PAI Tingkat Pusat bertanggung jawab untuk [...] menyusun dan menetapkan 75% butir soal (anchor item) USBN-PAI*" (Point III.3).

[28] Our translation of: "Pemerintah memberikan tunjangan profesi sebagaimana dimaksud dalam Pasal 15 ayat (1) kepada guru yang telah memiliki sertifikat pendidik yang diangkat oleh penyelenggara pendidikan dan/atau satuan pendidikan yang diselenggarakan oleh masyarakat. (2) Tunjangan profesi sebagaimana dimaksud pada ayat (1) diberikan setara dengan satu kali gaji."

[29] The amount of money for tuition fees varies according to the school's policies. For further discussion on the School Operational Support for High School Students program, cf. the website of the Directorate of Secondary Education of the Ministry of Education: http://dikmen.kemdiknas.go.id/html/index.php?id=berita&kode=64, accessed February 15, 2013.

report the financial circumstances of their students to the State and apply for financial support when they have limited financial resources.

b. Responses of schools to the powers of the State

The responses of the schools to the power of the State vary. The schools' policies on religious education in Islamic schools comply with the normative power of the State. Muslim schools require teachers to be graduates of State-accredited universities and use the state curriculum and textbooks.[30] All Islamic schools in our study comply with State inspections and require their students to take State examinations.[31] Islamic schools belonging to big religious communities and located in urban areas, such as those in West Java and in Bali, receive less State support than those belonging to small religious communities in rural areas, such as the Islamic schools in North Sulawesi. All Islamic schools receive additional salaries for certified teachers as indicated by Article 16 of Law No. 14/2005, as well as a number of scholarships for students with limited financial resources under the BOS-SMA program. In addition, schools belonging to small religious communities (in North Sulawesi) benefit from the State's special assistance programs for schools in rural and remote areas, called the Education Infrastructure Development Subsidies for Border Region, Underdeveloped and Outlying Islands.[32]

The responses of the Christian schools to the normative power of the State differ slightly from the responses of the Islamic schools. With the exception of the teacher from the Catholic school in West

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[30] The headmaster of the Muhammadiyah Islamic school says: "Of course we only hire teachers who have a bachelor university degree. Because in a university, teaehers are equipped with good teaching skills and learn how to develop syllabi appropriately". Our translation of: "*Tentu saja kami hanya menerima guru yang berijasah S1. Karena ketika ia belajar di universitas, ia akan dibekali dengan kemampuan mengajar yang baik dan cara mengembangkan silabus yang tepat.*"

[31] A teacher of the Wahid Hasyim school says: "All students are required to take the State exam. Then, the grade of the exam will determine whether he/she is able to pass to the next grade." Our translation of: "*Seluruh siswa diwajibkan untuk mengikuti ujian pendidikan agama. Nilai dari hasil ujian tersebut nantinya akan menentukan apakah siswa tersebut berhak lulus atau tidak.*"

[32] For further discussion regarding this grant, see the website of Higher Education, of the Ministry of Education amd Culture: http://www.dikti.go.id/files/atur/rbi/PenyaluranHibah.pdf (accessed 15 November 2013). The headmaster of the Assalam Islamic school in North-Sulawesi says: "Thank God that we receive support from the government. Two months ago, for instance, we received support to build a new laboratory and we started building it already." Our translation of: "*Alhamdulillah kami menerima bantuan dari pemerintah. Seperti dua bulan yang lalu, kami mendapatkan bantuan untuk membangun laboratorium baru, dan sekarang sedang dalam pembangunan.*"

Java, the teachers in Christian schools hold university degrees. Most Christian schools follow the State curriculum and use textbooks produced by the appointed institutions, except the Adventist school that follows a curriculum and uses a textbook developed by the local religious community. Christian schools in North Sulawesi (Christian majority) – except for the Adventist school – are visited by State inspectors who stimulate the implementation of religious education consistent with the State's regulations.[33] Except for the Adventist school, Christian schools also implement the State exam. None of the Christian schools in our sample receive significant State support, except for the Protestant school in North Sulawesi that has been granted support for library development.[34] In Christian schools, certified teachers accept financial support from the State, however the students do not receive State scholarships. Students with limited financial means receive indirectly support from families from higher economic strata. The monthly tuition fee is dependent on the income level of students' parents.[35]

Hindu schools comply with the normative power of the State, requiring teachers to be graduated from State-accredited universities. These schools also implement the State curriculum and use textbooks produced by the appointed publisher. The Hindu schools view State inspection as a means to improve the quality of the school. Several teachers report that they benefit from discussions with the inspectors. The Hindu schools also require that their students take the State exams. Except for the Gandhi school, the Hindu schools receive support from the Department of Religious Affairs at district level. Material support (in terms of e.g., books, furniture and office supplies) and financial support comes from the Department of Religious Affairs and

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[33] The headmaster of the Adventist school says that: "Long ago, when the Department of Religious Affairs sent their people to inspect the religious education in our school, we told them about the way we conduct our religious education, and it seems that the State does not bother what our policies are, and until now, we have never been inspected again." Our translation of: "*Dahulu ketika kami menerima inspeksi dari Departemen Agama, kami telah jelaskan ke mereka mengenai cara kami dalam menyelenggarakan pendidikan agama, dan nampaknya mereka tidak memperdulikan itu, dan sampai sekarang kami tidak pernah lagi menerima inspeksi.*"

[34] The headmaster of the Protestant school in North Sulawesi explains that his proposal to the Ministry of Education in Jakarta to build a new library was granted a few months ago. The Ministry will not only build the library but also support the purchase of books and other related equipment, such as furniture, etc.

[35] A Protestant school in West Java, for instance, charges monthly tuition fees ranging from zero to Rp. 550.000, with an average contribution of Rp. 275.000.

the Department of Education at district level, in contrast with Islamic schools who receive support directly from the Ministry of Religious Affairs at the national level. The headmaster of the Dwijendra school, for instance, mentions that the support from the Department of Religious Affairs and Department of Education at district level covers 8% of the school expenses. For the Saraswati school, the government's support covers 5% of the school expenses.

(2) The religious communities

Since the fall of the New Order regime in 1998, religious communities in Indonesia have greater freedom in managing their own institutions. They also have greater autonomy in the organization of religious education in terms of content and teaching methods. We will now investigate how religious communities use their normative, coercive and utilitarian power to shape the policies of religious education, and how religiously affiliated schools respond to the (potential) influence of religious communities. Religious communities often exercise their power via (the board of) the education foundations (*Yayasan Pendidikan)* that organize the religiously affiliated schools.

a.The potential power of religious communities in influencing school policies

Religious communities exercise their normative power in two ways: requirements for teachers and the use of textbooks. First, teachers are expected to be committed members of their religious community and to have a normative understanding of the religious teachings of their religious community. More specifically this means that teachers in Islamic Muhammadiyah schools should be members of Muhammadiyah, while teachers in Wahid Hasyim school are often members of Nahdlatul Ulama. Similarly, religious education teachers in Protestant schools are mostly required to be active members of one of the Churches of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI or *Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia*), while religious education teachers in Catholic schools are required to be practicing and committed Catholics. Next, several schools implement an additional curriculum and use textbooks that emphasize participation in religious rituals. In this way, local religious communities seem to strive for a religious education compatible with their own specific ideologies.

The coercive power of the religious communities is exercised in two ways: the appointment of headmasters and the organization of

school exams. The headmaster is a member of the religious community, and he/she has to give a yearly report to the board of the foundation, including a section on religious education. The headmaster is also required to discuss the implementation of the policies of religious education in the classroom with the board of the education foundation (*Yayasan Pendidikan*). In some schools, in addition to the State exams, the board, together with the teachers of religion, makes school examinations for the subject of religious education. This exam aims to test whether students practice religious rituals in accordance with the normative teachings of the religious community, such as daily prayer or reciting Holy Scripture, etc.

Utilitarian power of the religious community is exercised through the board of the foundation in two ways: provision of infrastructure and equipment, and financial support. The board is responsible for providing school buildings and learning equipment. Schools formulate a yearly budget to be discussed with the board. If students' contributions do not sufficiently cover the school expenses, the board is expected to take care of additional funding. School expenses including remuneration of headmasters are discussed with the board of the foundation on behalf of the religious community.

b. Responses of schools to the powers of religious communities

Let us look briefly at how the Islamic, Christian and Hindu schools respectively react to the (potential) influence of the religious communities that are affiliated with the schools.

- *Islamic Schools*

The Islamic schools in our survey all respond in the same way to the religious communities' power. With regard to normative power, the teachers implement an additional curriculum of their own religious community and use specific textbooks that introduce the normative teachings of their religious community. Islamic schools are able to do so because the Islamic schools in our study spend three to four times more time on Islamic religious education than the government expects them to.[36] For coercive power, all headmasters are appointed by the

[36] The Government Regulation No. 55/2007, article 5.8 mentions that "[...] each education unit could add content of religious education as needed." Our translation of: "[...] *satuan pendidikan dapat menambah muatan pendidikan agama sesuai kebutuhan.*" In addition, article 5.9 states that "[...] the content referred to in subsection (8) may include additional material, study hours, and depth of the material." Our translation of: *"[...] muatan sebagaimana dimaksud pada ayat (8) dapat berupa tambahan materi, jam pelajaran, dan*

religious organization affiliated with the school.[37] Therefore, control of the religious community over the implementation of religious education is apparent. All Islamic schools in our study organize examinations that focus on the normative teachings of the particular religious community that is affiliated with concerned school. This exam tests whether students understand and practice the teachings in accordance with a particular understanding of Islam.[38] Islamic schools are also happy to receive material and financial support from the religious community.[39]

Islamic religious communities expect their students to internalize Islamic teachings. Even though the Islamic schools in our study belong to different Islamic organizations, they show remarkable similarities in their theological foundations. The Islamic schools in our study are affiliated with three different religious organizations: Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama and al-Azhar. *Muhammadiyah* strongly opposes religious syncretism and encourages the purification of Islamic teachings. Muhammadiyah works for the establishment of a pure Islamic faith, free of idolatry, heresy and superstition.[40] The headmaster of the Muhammadiyah school in West Java testifies: "Religious education in our school aims to guide students to live in accordance with God's rules. Students should have a strong and correct religious

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kedalaman materi." A similar rule can be found in the Ministry of Religious Affairs regulation 1/2010 article 7.3 (see footnote 19 above).

[37] The headmaster of the Muhammadiyah school in Bali, for instance, testifies: "Well, I used to be a member of the *Majelis Tarjih* of the Muhammadiyah organization in Yogyakarta. Then, the board of the foundation for basic and secondary schools of the Muhammadiyah elected me to lead this school and to replace the previous headmaster who retired." Our translation of: "*Ya, saya sebelum menjabat kepala sekolah di sini, dulunya anggota Majelis Tarjih PP Muhammadiyah di Yogyakarta. Saya kemudian ditugaskan oleh Majelis Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah PP muhammadiyah untuk menggantikan kepala sekolah yang sebelumnya baru pension.*"

[38] The Wahid Hasyim school, for instance, tests whether students are able to read the *Barzanji* and lead the *Tahlil* rituals. Reading the *Barzanji* and *Tahlil* rituals is only practiced by Nahdlatul Ulama followers. Muhammadiyah followers regard it as a deviation from original Islamic teaching (*Bid'ah*).

[39] The al-Azhar school in West Java receives up to 5 % of the school expenses from the religious community, in addition to the infrastructure that is already provided by them. The headmaster testifies: "We receive support for buildings and equipment from the Islamic Education Foundation of al-Azhar. However, we hope to be more independent". Our translation of: "*Kami memperoleh bantuan gedung dan perlengkapan sekolah dari Yayasan Pendidikan Islam al-Azhar. Kami sebenarnya berhadap mudah-mudahan kedepannya kami bias lebih mandiri lagi.*"

[40] For further information regarding the vision and mission of the Muhammadiyah, cf. its website: http://www.muhammadiyah.or.id/id/content-175-det-matan-keyakinan-dan-citacita-hidup.html, accessed November 15, 2013.

commitment. When we introduce other religions, e.g. the principles of Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism, we show them how the Islamic foundation differs from it and why it [Islamic foundation] is better than others."[41] *Nahdlatul Ulama* advances the teaching of *Ahlussunnah Waljamaah,* that can be characterized as Islamic moderation (*at-tawasuth*), balance (*at-tawazun*) and maintenance of harmony (*al-I'tidal*). Nahdlatul Ulama is rather exclusive in nature, claiming that Islam is the only truth. Even though al-I'tidal implies a more positive evaluation of other believers, yet they maintain that only Islam leads to salvation. Finally, *Al-Azhar* is a relatively new Islamic education movement. It introduces the idea of Muslim comprehensiveness which relates to a literalist understanding of Islam. Al-Azhar schools are not directly related to a well-established Muslim organization, but rather function as a network of schools sponsored by local foundations and administered by a central institution in Jakarta. All schools are required to use religious textbooks as prepared and produced by the headquarters. Al-Azhar appeals for more attention to the Qur'an and Hadith. The headmaster of the al-Azhar school explains: "Our school is a non-sectarian one. We neither belong to Nahdlatul Ulama or Muhammadiyah, nor to any other religious sect. We teach to our students that Islam is only one. We try to unite all Islamic sects into a concept of so-called Islamic Unity. We also believe that what is written in the Qur'an and *Sunnah* can explain the real truth."[42]

• *Christian schools*

There is also influence of religious communities on religious education in Christian schools, although it is less strong than in Islamic schools. As far as normative power concerns, all Christian schools expect religious education teachers to be committed members of the religious community to which they belong. Since one Christian school in Bali provides religious education for Hindu and Muslim students, they also hire a Hindu and a Muslim teacher. Only the Adventist

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[41] Our translation of: "*Pelajaran agama di sekolah ini memberikan pedoman hidup bagi siswa supaya memiliki keyakinan yang kuat dan benar. Ketika siswa diperkenalkan dengan agama lain, seperti ketuhanan di Kristen, Hindu dan Buddha, kami tunjukkan pada siswa bahwa ajaran kita berbeda dan tentunya lebih baik.*"

[42] Our translation of: "*Kami bukan sekolah yang sektarian. Kami bukan Nahdlatul Ulama ataupun Muhammadiyah, atau kelompok agama yang lain. Kami mengajarkan kepada siswa bahwa Islam itu cuman satu dan coba menyatukan berbagai paham berbeda yang intinya mengajarkan pada konsep Islam yang satu. Kami juga hanya menganggap yang tertulis di al-Qur'an dan Sunnah yang dapat menjelaskan kebenaran yang sebenarnya.*"

school in North Sulawesi implements an 'additional' curriculum of religious education next to that of the State. This school also uses a textbook developed by the Adventist community. But all other Christian schools implement the State's curriculum and only use textbooks provided by the appointed State publishers. With the exception of students of the Adventist school who receive religious education every day, the Christian schools in our research offer two credit hours of religious education (i.e. 80 minutes per week). As far as coercive power concerns, Christian schools are led by an active and committed member of the religious community.[43] Again with the exception of the Adventist school, all Christian schools participate in the centralized State examination for religious education. As for utilitarian power, all Christian schools receive material (building and equipment) and financial support from religious communities.[44]

Most Christian religious communities expect the school to provide religious education that enhances the knowledge of the own religion and stimulates participation in the own tradition. According to the headmaster in North Sulawesi, the Catholic Church gives the Dioceses some freedom in the organization of religious education. This could explain the differences in policies of religious education in the different Catholic schools in our research. The Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI) says they want to be "[...] a church that reflects God's goodness in the midst of a pluralistic society in Indonesia".[45] This open-minded mission is not really reflected in the religious education in schools. All Protestant schools in our study provide Protestant religious education only. If other religious traditions are mentioned, it concerns the clarification of Christian teaching. The Catholic schools different policies towards religious education seem to be dependent on whether they are in the majority or minority context. In North Sulawesi (Christian majority) the headmaster of a Catholic school says: "It is obvious that as a Catholic institution, we have to teach mainly Catholicism to all students. There is an obligation for us

[43] The headmaster of the Protestant school in West Java is a board member of the Indonesian Christian Church (*Gereja Kristen Indonesia*), while the headmaster of the Protestant school in North Sulawesi is a board member of the Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa (*Gereja Maschi Injili di Minahasa*).

[44] The Protestant school in North Sulawesi receives 5% of the total school expenses from the Christian Evangelical Church. The Adventist school receives up to 10% of their financial expenses from the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Indonesia.

[45] PGI website: http://www.pgi.or.id/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=106&Itemid=293, accessed November 15, 2013.

to disseminate the Catholic teachings to our students and ensure that students understand the teachings correctly."[46] But in Bali (Hindu majority) the headmaster of the Catholic school says: "Our school aims to create an inclusive education environment that attracts and creates disciplined, intelligent and independent students, based on love."[47] As said, this school offers Islamic and Hindu religious education beside Catholic religious education. However, it still applies a mono-religious model: within each classroom the religious education teacher looks at other religious traditions from the insider's perspective. The Catholic school in West Java finally applies the inter-religious model by emphasizing dialogue with students from other religions. The teacher says: "Through religious education, we stimulate students to find differences between religious traditions among their friends. Students should understand that their religion is different from their friends' and then we invite them to start a dialogue with friends from different religious backgrounds."[48] The Adventist school in North Sulawesi (Christian majority) does not include other religious traditions in its religious education.[49]

- *Hindu schools*

Compared with Islamic and Christian schools, religious communities seem to have less influence in Hindu schools. But still, the different types of power are exercised. Hindu schools prefer to have teachers of religious education that are committed members. They are also expected to be graduates from prestigious universities, such as the Hindu Dharma Institute (Institut Hindu Dharma) and the State Bali Universi-

[46] Our translation of: *"Tentunya kami harus mengajarkan mengajarkan pelajaran agama Katolik kepada semua murid kami karena kami adalah institusi milik Katolik. Sudah menjadi keharusan bagi kami untuk mengajarkan iman katolik kepada siswa kami dan memastikan bahwa mereka memahaminya dengan benar."*

[47] Our translation of: *"Sekolah kami bertujuan untuk menciptakan lingkungan pendidikan yang inklusif dan berdaya pikat membentuk peserta didik yang disiplin, cerdas, mandiri berlandaskan kasih."*

[48] Our translation of: *"Melalui pendidikan agama, kami ingin mengajarkan pada siswa agar mengetahui dan mau mempelajari bahwa ajaran agama itu tidak sama. Para siswa harus memahami bahwa ajaran agamanya berbeda dengan agama temannya yang lain, dan kemudian kami mengajak siswa untuk berdialog dengan teman yang berlainan agama itu."*

[49] The curriculum and textbook of religious education in the Adventist school is developed by the Secretary General of the Seventh Day Adventist Church in the USA. Religious education consists of faith development, participation in rituals and religious ethics. The headmaster says: *"Through daily religious education, we remind our students to strengthen their religious commitment and to share our teachings with others. Others might need time to understand our beliefs, but that doesn't matter."*

ty (Universitas Negeri Bali). All three Hindu schools require a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 (on a four-point scale) of their teachers. The headmaster of the Dwijendra school says: "Of course, we expect that the [religious education] teacher interprets religion in the same way as the community does. But who can guarantee that he/she is capable of teaching religion? Teaching religion is not only a matter of understanding religion, but includes pedagogical capacities as well. We want to have smart teachers and it should be shown by the GPA he/she had at his/her university."[50] Since all Hindu schools offer Islamic and Christian religious education as well, they have also Muslim and Christian teachers. The headmasters are Hindu. But the schools do not use additional textbooks developed by their religious communities, neither do they organize additional exams. All Hindu schools in our study receive very little financial support from the religious communities they are affiliated with. The largest part of their budget is funded by tuition fees.[51]

With regard to the theological foundation of the Hindu schools in our research, we can say that they are rather open towards other religious traditions. While Dwijendra is considered to be more orthodox, they still stress adaptation towards the local culture. Saraswati holds that religious education should be able to unite people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. People from different backgrounds should work to inspire humanitarian purposes. Similarly, the Gandhi organization stresses respect for other religions, cultures and ethnicities.

Conclusion

Schools are a major factor in (religious) socialization. Without doubt the models of religious education influence the religious identity of students in the long term. State and religious communities directly influence the policies of religious education through normative, coercive and utilitarian power. Indirectly the applied models of religious

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[50] Our translation of: "*Tentu saja kami mengharapkan memiliki guru agama yang mempunyai pemahaman agama yang sama. Tapi siapa yang bias menjamin kalau ia punya kemampuan mengajar.' Mengajar agama bukan sekedar memahami agama, tapi juga harus didalamnya termasuk kemampuan pedagogis. Kami disini ingin punya guru yang cerdas dan itu harus dibuktikan dengan nilai IPK yang diperoleh di bangku kuliah.*"

[51] The school buildings and equipment are provided by the Hindu education foundations (*Yayasan Pendidikan*). In addition, the Dijendra and Saraswati schools receive about 2% of school expenses from the foundation. The further expenses of the Gandhi school are covered by student tuition payments.

education influence the religious identity of the coming generation. We can summarize our findings as follows:

First, we found that most religiously affiliated schools employ a mono-religious model of religious education. Even though some schools introduce teachings about other religions in their curriculum, the perspective is from their own point of view only. The Catholic school in West Java (Christian minority) offers an inter-religious model of religious education.

Second, we saw that the State and religious communities influence the policies of religious education at school level in different ways. Let us summarize the main findings for Islamic, Christian and Hindu schools separately.

In Islamic schools, all types of institutional power from both the State and religious communities are responded to positively. Religious education in Islamic schools is in line with what the government wants: mono-religious education. The Islamic religious organizations affiliated with the schools strengthen this preference for the mono-religious model. Islamic schools devote three to four times more time than the State's requires of them. The religious communities even implement additional curricula that strengthen the involvement with the own religious tradition.

In Christian schools the influence of the State is less strong than in Islamic schools. Four schools comply with the State's regulations. One school (the Adventist school) conforms to the State's model of mono-religious education, but implements its own curriculum. One school that applies the inter-religious model does not comply with the State's regulations. Another Catholic school organizes religious education for Muslim, Christian and Hindu students separately. This diverse picture gives the impression that religious communities (and specifically the education foundations) comply to the State's regulations when they substantially agree with the choice for mono-religious education. Schools in a minority context especially that are looking for possibilities to start a dialogue with other religious traditions are hindered by the State's regulations. One could critically ask whether the State's policies do not rather stimulate segregation than contact between religious traditions.[52]

In Hindu schools the State's regulations are very influential on the policies of religious education. Although the Hindu organizations are

[52] See for a similar critique the recent report of Human Rights Watch. In Religion's Name. Abuses against Religious Minorities in Indonesia. New York www.hrw.org 2013.

keen to stimulate dialogue, they prefer to organize mono-religious education. On the other hand, they are open to organizing religious education for all major religious traditions in their own schools.

Attitudes towards Religious Plurality. Comparative Research Among Muslim and Christian University Students in Indonesia

Carl Sterkens and *Handi Hadiwitanto*

Religious plurality is one of the key challenges for the truth claims that are always, to a certain degree, part of religious traditions. Because of increased mobility and the growing scale and frequency of contacts between different cultural groups (globalization), society is characterized by even greater plurality than ever before. Plurality includes different aspects, ranging from language, ethnicity and cultural norms, and includes religion as well. In general, plurality increases the number of relevant institutions, in the widest sense of the word, which in turn leads to even more variety of convictions, values and norms.[1] Since people require their convictions to be endorsed by their social environment, religious convictions will change when times are a changing, or at least should change if they do not want to fall out of step with the surrounding society. Discussing belief in the modern plural context, Schillebeeckx[2] states: "A person's inner conviction is perhaps just as strong as ever as confirmation, but of course more modest, more reserved and in this sense to some degree 'relativized': modern believers know that there is also truth in other convictions about life". But whether this is a descriptive observation or a normative wish, is a point for discussion. After all, religious radicalization

[1] Cf. Mary Douglas. *How Institutions Think*. New York 1986.

[2] Edward Schillebeeckx. *Church. The Human Story of God*. London 2014, 49 [1990, 50].

and flourishing of religious fundamentalism are regarded by many as modern phenomena as well.[3]

In this contribution, we will describe how Muslim and Christian University students in Indonesia deal with religious plurality. A detailed discussion of these students' attitudes has its place in this section reflecting on religious identity. Apart from the cultural differences one has to deal with on a daily basis, the presence of other religions in a person's direct environment also leads to intellectual, religious and theological challenges for individual believers. In a plural society, the way one deals with religious plurality is undoubtedly part of a person's religious identity. There are many reasons why Indonesia offers an interesting point of comparison to the Western context. With a theology strongly influenced by Dutch and German culture, the iposite to that in European countries. Based on the 2010 national census, out of a total Indonesian population of 237,641,326, approximately 87.2 percent is Muslim, 7.0 percent is Protestant, 2.9 percent is Catholic, and 1.7 percent is Hindu (Indonesian Statistics 2010). Next, religion is prominent in Indonesia. It can be described as belonging to the 'normal atmosphere' that Indonesians breathe. Religion is closely intertwined with culture in general, and is influential in daily individual and societal life.[4] And finally, with its dense population, individual believers can hardly avoid contact with (people belonging to) other religious traditions – even when distribution of belief is somehow geographically defined.[5] Failure to develop good communication between religious communities will inevitably generate tensions. That is why communication between religions can be seen as a sign of active participation in society more generally. Inter-religious dialogue shows that people are at least showing some respect to each other, recognize other communities to a certain extent, and are initially willing to solve differences through reasoned negotiation.[6]

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[3] Michael Emerson and David Hartman, The Rise of Religious Fundamentalism, in: *Annual Review of Sociology* 32, 2006, 127-144.

[4] Aloysius Pieris, The Place of Non-Christian Religions and Cultures in the Evolution of Third World Theology, in: *Christianity and Other Religions*, John Hick and Brian Hebblethwaite (eds), England 2001, 71; José Maria Vigil, *Theology of Religious Pluralism*, Zurich 2008, 17 and 28.

[5] While the Muslim population dominates in most of the archipelago, some regions have a substantial Christian population. The provinces where Christian population is above 30 percent are East Nusa Tenggara, Papua, West Papua, North Sulawesi, Maluku, West Kalimantan and North Sumatra (Statistics Indonesia 2010).

[6] David Herbert, *Religion and Civil Society. Rethinking Public Religion in the Contemporary World*, Hampshire 2003, 88.

In the description of how Indonesian university students deal with religious plurality, we will make use of the categories established in the so-called 'theology of religions'. The classifications within theology of religions show how exclusive or inclusive one's religious attitudes towards others are. We shall explore the attitudes toward religious plurality from theoretical and empirical perspectives. What are the attitudes toward religious plurality that can be found amongst Muslim and Christian university students in Indonesia, and are there any significant differences between Muslims and Christians? Which personal (socio-economic and religious) characteristics and which contextual characteristics are related to specific attitudes toward religious plurality among our Indonesian students? First, we present attitudes toward religious plurality based on the theology of religions. Second, we investigate how far these attitudes are present in our research population.

1. Attitudes towards religious plurality from a theoretical perspective

In this section we will describe different attitudes toward religious plurality from a theoretical perspective. In the latter half of the 20th century, Christian communities woke up to the impossibility of thinking about one's own religion in isolation from other religious traditions. Making sense of other religions from the perspective of the Christian faith gave rise to a 'theology of religions' that deals with different attitudes toward religious plurality. Initially, many authors in this field worked with three models: exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism. While exclusivism and inclusivism have a strong basis in the history of theology, pluralism became – as a concept – subject to growing debate. Are there distinct theological models of pluralism? Is pluralism equal to relativism, etc.? At the same time, discussions emerged whether these distinctions, mainly to be found within Christian theology, could also be used to categorize convictions in other religious traditions. In other words: can one find these different attitudes toward religious plurality among non-Christian believers as well? And if so, can we determine and operationalize them in the same way?

It is here that we pick up the discussion. There is abundance of terminology in the classification of attitudes towards religious plurality. Adding another one is not our aim here. We choose for a little

modified version of Knitter'[7] most recent classification, because it was empirically tested in a previous cross-religious comparative study among Muslims, Christians, and Hindus in Tamil Nadu.[8] We use the labels of the latter, since this categorization proved applicable to respondents belonging to different religious traditions as operationalised in a questionnaire. Before asking to what extent our Indonesian respondents agreed upon these models, we briefly describe the five models theoretically, and try to find traces of these models in both Christianity and Islam. These five models of interpreting religious plurality will be discussed: replacement monism; fulfilment monism; commonality pluralism; differential pluralism; and relativistic pluralism.

Replacement monism

Central to Knitter's[9] replacement model is the conviction that one particular religion is the only true religion. As a consequence, one's religion is valid and universal, and hence it will replace all other religious traditions. The judgment of the early church fathers Origen and Saint Cyprian that there is no salvation outside the Church (*"extra ecclesiam nulla salus"*) demonstrates the attitude that true faith in God can only be found in the community of real Christians.[10] In Protestantism, the replacement model emerged in traditional interpretations of the dictum "*sola fide, sola gratia, sola scriptura*", meaning that there is no justification outside faith, no salvation without divine grace, and that the Bible is the only authoritative word of God.[11] In Islam the core of faith, as expressed in the *sahada* (the confession/witness to faith), says: "There is no god but God (*Allah*) and Muhammad is God's messenger". The revelation through Muhammad is considered to be God's final message to the world, and Islam is considered to be

[7] Paul Knitter. *Introducing Theologies of Religions*. New York 2002.

[8] Francis-Vincent Anthony, Chris Hermans and Carl Sterkens. Interpreting Religious Pluralism. Comparative Research among Christian, Muslim and Hindu Students in Tamil Nadu, India, in: *Journal of Empirical Theology* 18, 2005, 154-186; cf. Francis-Vincent Anthony, Chris Hermans and Carl Sterkens. *Religion and Conflict. An Empirical Study in the Religious Meaning System of Christian, Muslim and Hindu Students in Tamil Nadu, India*. New York 2014.

[9] Knitter. *Introducing Theologies of Religions*.

[10] Cf. Johann Auer and Joseph Ratzinger. *Kleine Katholische Dogmatik*. IX. Regensburg 1983.

[11] Cf. Karl Barth. The Revelation of God as the Abolition of Religion, in: *Christianity and Plurality. Classic and Contemporary Readings*. Richard J. Plantinga (ed.). Oxford 1999, 227ff.

the pure religion of Abraham. The only way to obtain salvation is through submission to God in Islam.[12] These few examples make clear that there are traces of replacement monism in both Christianity and Islam. Generally, replacement monism entails that salvation (or liberation, redemption or compassion) can be found through one religious tradition only. Other religious traditions do not contain truth and should be replaced by the true one. As many other scholars, the earlier Knitter[13] called this the exclusivism model.

Within replacement monism Knitter further distinguishes between those who hold out for total replacement and those who defend a need for partial replacement. The first group knows a radical monistic orientation and excludes the possibility of divine revelation in other religious traditions, let alone salvation.[14] The latter group still maintains the absoluteness and superiority of the own tradition, but acknowledges the possibility of revelation in other religions, even though they cannot offer salvation.[15] Also in present-day Indonesia, replacement monism is prevalent in some groups that strive for aggressive Christianisation or Islamisation.[16]

Fulfilment monism

Fulfilment monism combines the affirmation of God's presence in other religions with the non-negotiable aspect of salvation through the own tradition. In this model, people believe that God can work in many religions, and that other traditions endorse particular religious experiences that hold partial truths or parts of the truth. However, only one's own religion contains the full truth and can fulfil the shortcomings of other religious traditions. This perspective was already adopted by some of the early church fathers in their dealings with the Greco-Roman world (e.g. Justin Martyr and Tertullian), and has been revived

[12] Sura 2:130.135; 4:59; Norman Calder et al., *Classical Islam. A Source of Religious Literature*, London/New York 2003, 135-139; Montgomery Watt, *Early Islam. Collected Articles*, Edinburgh 1990, 38.

[13] Paul Knitter, *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christians Attitudes Towards the World Regions*, New York 1985.

[14] Barth, The Revelation of God as the Abolition of Religion; Gerald Birney Smith, The Spirit of Evangelical Christianity, in: *The Journal of Religion* 2, 1922, 626-632.

[15] E.g. Paul Tillich, Christianity Judging Itself in the Light of Its encounter with the World Religions, in: Richard J. Plantinga (ed.), *Christianity and Plurality. Classic and Contemporary Readings*, Oxford 1999, 286.

[16] Cf. Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened. Muslim-Christian Relations in Indonesia's New Order*, Leiden and Amsterdam 2006; Zachary Abuza, *Political Islam and Violence in Indonesia*, London and New York 2007.

by the mainline churches: Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Methodist, Anglican and Greek Orthodox. In the Catholic tradition, the documents of the Second Vatican Council (Nostra Aetate 2; Ad Gentes 9, 11, 15, 18) stopped short at this position by acknowledging the presence of "rays of Truth" and "seeds of the Word" in other religious traditions, which are thus seen as "preparation for the Gospel" (Lumen Gentium 16). More recently, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (2000) writes in its declaration Dominus Iesus (no 8): "Therefore, the sacred books of other religions, which in actual fact direct and nourish the existence of their followers, receive from the mystery of Christ the elements of goodness and grace which they contain." The pioneering works of Rahner[17] clarify this trend as well. Rahner acknowledges that God's grace is active in other religions and views them as possible channels of revelation. At the same time, since Jesus Christ is God's ultimate revelation and the final cause of human salvation, those who receive grace in their own religions are unwittingly oriented to Christianity and hence can be considered 'anonymous Christians'.[18] Newbigin[19] is another modern theologian influential in Asia that can be categorized clearly into this model. Islam too, knows this inclusive approach toward other religious traditions, for instance when Muhammad is called 'the seal of the prophets' or 'the last prophet' (*khatam al-anbiya*). He is the greatest and the last of prophets of the Abrahamic religions (Sura 33:40; 68:4; 41:5; 6:50; 21:107). This implies the inclusion and acceptance of previous (pre-Islamic) prophets, even though they did not receive a revelation in the same way.[20]

As many other scholars, the earlier Knitter called this 'inclusivism'. But the label 'fulfilment monism' makes the familiarity with 'replacement monism' more clear. In both the underlying dilemma is how to reconcile the universality and the diversity of religions. The accent on the uniqueness and universality of one's own religion is in both models so heavy that other traditions are either totally or partially

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[17] Karl Rahner, *Grace in Freedom*, New York 1969; Karl Rahner, *Opportunities for Faith*, London 1970.

[18] Cf. John Cobb Jr., *Transforming Christianity and the World. A Way Beyond Absolutism and Relativism*, New York 1999, 25ff.

[19] Lesslie Newbigin, The Gospel and the Religions, in: *Christianity and Plurality, Classic and Contemporary Readings*, Richard J. Plantinga (ed.), Oxford 1999.

[20] Murata Sachiko and William Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*, London 2006; Abdel Haleem, Qur'an and Hadith, in: *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, Tim Winter (ed.), New York 2008, 19ff.

invalidated. They share a monistic perspective: the absolute validity of one's own religion. Small surprise then, that 'fulfilment monism' and 'replacement monism' are regularly found to cluster together in empirical surveys in varied research populations.[21]

Commonality pluralism

The pluralism models do not start from the superiority and absoluteness of the own religion, but appreciate plurality positively. Setting aside the non-negotiable elements, commonality pluralism prefers to focus on the underlying common elements of which the various religions are diversified expressions. The validity of religious experience cannot be limited to one religion only. On the contrary, each religious tradition can contribute to a complete expression of the ultimate truth. To relate across the apparently irreconcilable differences, religious traditions need to discover the elements that they share. Knitter – who uses the label 'mutuality pluralism' – describes commonality pluralism in terms of three complementary perspectives: philosophical-historical, religious-mystical and ethical-practical.

The *philosophical-historical* perspective highlights the historical limitations of all religions and the philosophical possibility of one Divine Reality underlying all religions. According to Hick[22], who represents this trend, lack of a common source or goal would mean that religions are going in different directions. In his view the *noumenon* is always more than the phenomenon that is accessible to us. All human knowledge is historically conditioned or socially constructed. Thus different religions point to differences in the manner of experiencing, conceptualising and living in relation to the ultimate Divine Reality that transcends the capacity of any one religion. Hick believes that the specific expressions of the ultimate Divine Reality (i.e., God, Allah, Brahman etc.) are the result of the postulated ground of different forms of religious experience. They are human responses to a transcendent reality or the result of human interpretation of religious experience.[23] To avoid falling into the trap of relativism, Hick suggests that

[21] Paul Vermeer and Johannes Van der Ven, Looking at the relationship between religions. An empirical study among secondary school students, in: *Journal of Empirical Theology* 17, 2004, 36-59; Anthony et al., Interpreting Religious Pluralism, 154-186.

[22] John Hick, *God and the Universe of Faiths. Essays in the Philosophy of Religion*, Oxford 1973; John Hick, *God Has Many Names*, New York 1980; John Hick, *Dialogues in the Philosophy of Religion*, New York 2001.

[23] Hick, *God and the Universe of Faiths*, 140; John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion. Human Response to the Transcendent*, New Haven 1989, 103f.; Hick, *Dialogues in the Philoso-*

the value of religions be gauged by the extent to which they promote self-sacrificing concern for the good of others.

The *religious-mystical* approach departs from the awareness that religious experience in one's own tradition is limited, while openness is shown for religious experience in other traditions. The religious-mystical approach holds that Divine Reality is greater than anything that can be experienced in one single tradition, and is rather accessible in the mystical experiences of various religions. Knitter identifies Panikkar[24] as one of the Asian theologians that embraces this approach. According to Panikkar, mystical experience is based on a necessary interrelationship among three components: the divine, the human and the material world. Insofar as the divine does not exist without the human and the material, the divine itself is as diverse as the religions. Behind the diversity of religions there is this one religious fact. The differences between religions, then, are opportunities for mutual fertilization and growth.

The *ethical-practical* perspective points to the common challenge of alleviating the needs and sufferings of the poor and the oppressed. This responsibility gives religions an opportunity for understanding themselves and others. An ethical agenda becomes in other words common ground within diversity. This stance can be recognized in Asian liberation theology.[25] In Indonesian Islam, the issue of solidarity with the impoverished over the boundaries of the religious divide, can be noted in discussions of the legitimate agents to collect and/or receive alms (*zakāt*).[26] Indeed, the World Parliament of Religions in 1993 and 1999 defines the ethical agenda provided by human and ecological suffering as common to all religions.[27]

In brief, in 'commonality pluralism', joint reflections on transcendence, shared religious experiences or common societal aims form the bridge in the encounter of religions. The Indonesian government has been stimulating for a long time the idea to seek common

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phy of Religion, 33f; cf. William Placher, *Unapologetic Theology. A Christian Voice in a Pluralistic Conversation*, Louisville, Kentucky 1989, 145ff; Peter Phan, *Being Religious Interreligiously. Asian Perspectives on Interfaith Dialogue*, New York 2004, 102ff.

[24] Raimundo Panikkar, *A Dwelling Place for Wisdom*, Louisville 1993.

[25] Michael Amaladoss, *The Asian Jesus*, New York 2006; Aloysius Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation*, New York 1988.

[26] Michael Barry Hooker, *Indonesian Islam. Social change through contemporary fatawa*, Honolulu 2003, 111-117; Franz von Benda-Beckmann, *Social security between past and future: Ambonese networks of care and support*, Münster 2007.

[27] Hans Küng, *Christianity and World Religions. Paths to Dialogue*, New York 1993, xvii-xx.

ground among religions. During the New Order regime (1977-1989), 'harmony' was a key concept in inter-religious relationships, and the *Pancasila* ideology may be interpreted as an effort to look for joint inspiration among the different religious traditions.[28] We could therefore expect that it is one of the most popular models to interpret inter-religious relations in Indonesia.

Differential pluralism

Differential pluralism – labelled the 'acceptance model' by Knitter[29] – stresses that traditions demonstrate different religious experiences or offer religiously different interpretations of diverse events. While different religions can be interrelated, connected and brought into unifying relationships, 'the many' cannot be melted down to one. The cultural filters are so different that we cannot measure one religion according to the measuring system of another. Every religious tradition has its own experiences and its own language that cannot be assessed or fitted to pre-existing categories. Because of incommensurability, at best traditions can offer some 'theological hospitality' to make room within the own identity for the foreign.[30] Knitter identifies three different perspectives in differential pluralism: a cultural-linguistic view of religion, plurality of ultimate concerns, and theological comparison.

The *cultural-linguistic* view departs from a postmodern discourse that emphasizes respect for differences. In postmodernism, there is no place for one dominant or superior religion because the entirety of life and thought is shaped by diverse and unique cultural and linguistic frameworks.[31] Because these frameworks simply do not fit, commonalities between religions are rare. A kind of dialectical process which can lead to mutual learning and self-correction might be possible, but by no means can one's own grand theory be imposed on others.

The *plurality of ultimates* perspective finds a representative in Mark Heim[32] who posits that differences between religions are not just

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[28] Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened*, 268ff; Benyamin Intan, *"Public Religion" and the Pancasila-based state of Indonesia. An ethical and sociological analysis*. New York etc. 2006.

[29] Knitter, *Introducing Theologies of Religions*.

[30] Marianne Moyaert, *Fragile Identities. Towards a Theology of Interreligious Hospitality*. Amsterdam, New York 2011, 266; cf. Cobb Jr., *Transforming Christianity and the World*, 184f; Vigil, Theology of Religious Pluralism, 82.

[31] George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine. Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 1984, 33; cf. Placher, *Unapologetic Theology*.

[32] Mark Heim, Salvations. *Truth and Difference in Religion*. New York 1995.

language-deep. Differences reach into the very soul of religions, into their ultimate elements. Religions can be moving towards different destinations or salvations. In the same way, differences in religions may also point to differences in the Divine Ultimate. Real differences between religions open up possibilities for learning something really new. Basically, there is validity in each individual, each community and each faith, because they have their own context, understanding and destination. It is therefore impossible to judge them from other contexts.[33]

The *comparative theological* approach emphasizes the difference between religious traditions as a basis for dialogue. No religion has complete information about other religions. To admit this ignorance implies the obligation to make an honest effort to converse with other religions. Through dialogue and comparison one can build a better understanding of the other religious traditions, as well as a better sense of one's own. Knitter[34] refers to Francis Clooney and James Fredericks as proclaiming this approach: "one enters dialogues both as believer convinced of the claims of one religious tradition and as a human being open to the possibility that one has something to learn from representatives of another religious tradition".

Differential pluralism too, has supporters in Indonesian society. Mukti Ali – Indonesia's former minister of religion (1971-1978) pioneered the study of comparative religions at the State Institute of Islamic Studies in Yogyakarta. This study departed from respect for difference and accepts disagreements between religions.[35] But to what extent do Muslims and Christians in Indonesia today accept the basic ideas of this model?

Relativistic pluralism

Questions about relativism usually appear in pluralism models, because the 'safe zone' is left where everything is clearly black or white. Knitter[36] does not describe relativism as a separate model, but refers to it as something that can arise within both commonality and differential pluralism. Still, commonality pluralism tries to avoid relativism by

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[33] Cobb Jr., *Transforming Christianity and the World*, 67-72.

[34] Knitter, Theologies of Religions, 203-207; Cf. Francis Clooney, *Comparative Theology. Deep Learning Across Religious Borders*, Chichester etc. 2010; James Fredericks, *Faith among faiths. Christian Theology and Non-Christian Religions*, New York 1999; cf. Cobb Jr., Transforming Christianity and the World, 66 and 180.

[35] Cf. Mujiburrahman, *Feeling Threatened*, 269f.

[36] Knitter, *Theologies of Religions*, 162ff; 224-229.

finding common ground in a normative content, and differential pluralism does so by looking at other traditions through their own cultural glasses instead of using one's own. But even in the attempts to avoid it, relativism rebounds again. In the first case one runs the risk of imposing one's normative ideas which are not applicable to others, thus of becoming 'imperialist'. In the second case, any form of critique from outer perspectives becomes impossible. However, relativism is described as not being necessarily part of pluralism. Following Anthony et al.[37], we therefore discuss it as a separate model.

But what is relativism? The Oxford Dictionary (2012) defines it as "the doctrine that knowledge, truth and morality exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context, and are not absolute". This sounds more descriptive, as 'relativism' as a term of abuse has sometimes become in theological debates. In theological debates, relativism is often seen as the impossibility or the refusal to come to any normative judgments whatsoever about religious traditions. Relativism is then a kind of "twilight world in which all cats are grey"[38] or the attitude to consider all norms as equally fair.[39] Formulated positively, relativism is the attitude of seeing different particular beliefs or complete religious traditions as always equally valid, equally profound and equally humanitarian. Regardless of the question of whether this is a valid definition, we have operationalised 'relativistic pluralism' in this latter meaning of the word.[40] As formulated by Anthony et al.[41]: relativism means that "all religions are held to be of equal value and significance, irrespective of any common elements and differences that may exist among them."

[37] Anthony et al., Interpreting Religious Pluralism.
[38] Knitter, *Theologies of Religions*, 162.
[39] Cobb Jr., *Transforming Christianity and the World*, 66.
[40] It is a point of discussion whether comparing religions induces relativism. After all, one could also turn the argument around: comparison – looking for common ground, or weighing advantages and disadvantages of different approaches – is a vital condition for, rather than an obstacle to, normative judgment. Particularly inasmuch the evaluation of religious traditions and their truth claims form part of dealing with religious plurality, comparison of different traditions in terms of a meta-theory is essential. Cf. Carl Sterkens, Educational Goals in Theology and Religious Studies. A Comparison Between University and Secondary School Education in Europe, in Hans-Georg Ziebertz and Ulrich Riegel (eds), *Perspectives on Teaching Religion. A Quantitative Study on Educational Goals and Methods in 25 European Countries*, Münster etc. 2009, 257-274, 258.
[41] Anthony et al., Interpreting Religious Pluralism, 161.

2. Attitudes towards religious plurality from an empirical perspective

We will now provide the empirical grounding of the conceptual framework that has been spelled out in the preceding section. We shall explore the empirical tenability of the conceptualisation of the five models described above, and explore their presence among Indonesian university students. First of all: do the empirical data corroborate with the theoretical conceptualisation of the attitudes towards religious plurality? And once measurements are established: what are the attitudes toward religious plurality that can be found amongst Muslim and Christian university students in Indonesia? Are there any significant differences between Muslims and Christians? And finally: which personal and contextual characteristics are related to specific attitudes toward religious plurality among our Indonesian students? Before we answer these questions empirically in separate sections, we briefly introduce our measuring instruments and data collection method.

Measuring instrument and data collection

The five models described above were operationalised in measuring instruments based on Anthony et al.[42] with few modifications for our specific research population. Each of the five models was operationalised in four items. Students could indicate their agreement with each item on a five-point Likert scale ranging from total disagreement (1) to full agreement (5). A complete list of the items can be found in the appendix. The complete questionnaire also included measurements of other religious convictions, as well as of personal and contextual background characteristics.[43]

The questionnaire was distributed to Muslim and Christian university students in two cities in Indonesia. We selected two cities where the specific history of relations between Muslims and Christians is quite different: Ambon and Yogyakarta. In Ambon city, relations between Muslims and Christians have been quite problematic since the late nineties (more specifically since the fall of Suharto in May 1998). In Yogyakarta, Muslims and Christians coexist relatively peacefully. Please note that the proportion of Muslims and Christians is quite different between these two research locations. According to

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[42] Anthony et al., Interpreting religious pluralism, 163f.

[43] What is presented here is part of a wider research project on religious attitudes and generalized trust. We focus on that part of the data that is relevant for discussion on religious truth claims.

official statistics of the census 2010, there are about 48 percent Christians and 51 percent Muslims in Maluku province, while in the city Ambon more than 60 percent are Christian. In Yogyakarta city about 92 percent is Muslim and 8 percent are Christians (Statistics Indonesia 2010). Within these two cities we selected a State university, an Islamic university, and a Christian university to participate in our research. The selected universities are Pattimura State University (UNPATI), Islamic State Institute (IAIN) and Maluku Christian University (UKIM); and Gadjah Mada State University (UGM), Islamic State University Sunan Kalijaga (UIN) and Duta Wacana Christian University (UKDW). In each university 250 respondents were selected randomly from the enrolment lists, which resulted in 1499 valid questionnaires, of which 46.6 percent were men and 51.6 percent women; and 52.8 percent were Muslims and 47.2 percent Christians.[44]

Cross-religious measurement of attitudes towards religious plurality

Are Muslims' and Christians' attitudes toward religious plurality in line with the theoretical models? Does a cross-religious comparative understanding of attitudes towards pluralism emerge among Muslim and Christian students once group-specific differences have been ascertained?

To answer these questions, we need to establish measurements that are equally applicable to Muslims and Christians. Since our models come from Christian theologies, this is not self-evident. Technically formulated, this issue concerns the 'cross-religious comparability' of the concepts and the 'measurement equivalence' of related operationalisation. As discussed more extensively elsewhere[45], comparative research necessitates a specific data analysis procedure to reach equivalence. This can be done via a three-step procedure of factor analyses. The first step involves an exploration of the factor structure for the pooled sample of Muslims and Christians together. Second, this factor structure is evaluated for each religious group separately.

[44] We limit ourselves to essentials here. More detailed information on sampling and data collection can be found in the doctoral dissertation of Hadiwitanto (forthcoming) or is available on request from the authors.

[45] William Meredith, Measurement invariance, factor analysis, and factorial invariance, in: *Psychometrika* 58, 1993, 525-543; Janet Harkness et al., *Cross-cultural Survey Methods*, Hoboken New Jersey 2003; Fons Van de Vijver, *Multilevel analysis of individuals and cultures*, New York 2008. Cf. Francis-Vincent Anthony et al., A Comparative study of mystical experience among Christian, Muslim and Hindu students in Tamil Nadu, India, in: *Journal for the Social Scientific Study of Religion* 49, 2010, 264-277.

These separate factor analyses show whether the overall structure of the first step holds good for each religious group. In other words, we wish to find out if the categories (i.e., scales) established in the overall analysis recurs in the analyses related to particular groups with all the items or with less. The purpose of this step is to uncover inter-group differences. These differences are eliminated in the third step that involves a factor analysis with the remaining items occurring in both religious traditions. In this third step the comparative measurement of the concerning concept is established. In doing so, a sieve of commonality is applied: what is distinctive is filtered out. This rather complicated procedure guarantees cross-religious comparability. We will report about the results of the third step factor analysis only, and briefly account for the differences filtered out in the second step.

Table 1 shows the result of the third step, i.e., the Principal Axis Factoring (Oblimin rotation) of the remaining items for both Muslims and Christians. This results in reliable measuring instruments that can be used for comparing Muslims and Christians with regard to "attitudes towards religious plurality".

Three factors were found which are equally applicable to Muslims and Christians. Replacement monism and fulfilment monism cluster in one single factor that we label 'monism' (items 5, 19, 4, 8, 10, 3, 1, 6). Commonality pluralism is measured by three items (items 7, 9 14), and relativistic pluralism is measured by three items as well (items 15, 17, 20). All other items are removed because they either show low commonalities (h^2), low or double factor loadings, or lead to different results for Muslims and Christians.

Table 1: Factor analysis (Paf, Oblimin rotation), commonalities (h^2), percentage of explained variance, and reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of comparative understanding of religious plurality among Muslim and Christian students.

Items	**Theory**	Dimension			
		F1	**F2**	**F3**	**h^2**
5. Compared with other religions, my religion offers the surest way to liberation.	Fulfillment monism	.82			.65
19. The truth about God, human beings and the universe is found only in my religion.	Replacement monism	.80			.65
4. Eventually my religion will replace other religions.	Replacement monism	.76			.61
8. Other religions will eventually find their fulfillment in mine.	Fulfillment monism	.72			.60
10. Other religions do not offer as deep a God-experience as my religion.	Fulfillment monism	.72			.56
3. Compared with my religion, other religions contain only partial truths.	Fulfillment monism	.72			.59
1. Only through my religion people can attain true liberation.	Replacement monism	.71			.42
6. Other religions do not offer a true experience of God.	Replacement monism	.69			.51
7. Different religions reveal different aspects of the same ultimate truth	Commonality pluralism		.62		.37
9. Different religions present different paths to the ultimate liberation.	Commonality pluralism		.59		.37
14. Different aspects of the same divine reality are experienced in different religions.	Commonality pluralism		.42		.22
15. All religions are equally valid ways to ultimate truth.	Relativistic pluralism			.89	.75
17. All religions are equally valid paths to liberation.	Relativistic pluralism			.85	.69
20. Although there are many religions, at the deepest level there are no real differences.	Relativistic pluralism			.50	.38
Cronbach's alpha		.91	.55	.80	
Number of valid cases		1459	1469	1482	
Total explained variance	52.60%				

Scale: 1=Totally disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=not sure; 4=Agree; 5= Totally agree
F1 = monism; F2 = commonality pluralism; F3 = relativistic pluralism

To illustrate the latter, we briefly refer to the second step. Christians agreed on all items of relativistic pluralism (items 2, 15, 17, 20) in one single factor. Another factor contained mixed items, i.e., differential pluralism (items 13, 11, 16, 18) and commonality pluralism (items 14, 12). Muslims were different from Christians. One factor consisted of mixed items, namely relativistic pluralism, differential pluralism and commonality pluralism (items 17, 15, 20, 16, 2, 12, 18) and another factor contained differential pluralism and commonality pluralism. Since we should obtain a comparative factor for both traditions, we tried to interpret and filter some items. Apparently, the respondents, either Muslims or Christians, were confused about differential pluralism as the items were scattered throughout the survey. For Muslims, differential pluralism items clustered with relativistic pluralism and commonality pluralism, whereas for Christians, differential pluralism clustered with commonality pluralism in one factor. We filtered all of the items of differential pluralism ("Differences between religions are an opportunity for revealing truth"; items 11, 13, 16, 18) because our respondents seem not to recognize the difference between differential pluralism and other forms of pluralism. Item 2 (relativistic pluralism: "All religions provide an equally profound experience of God") and item 12 ("The similarities among religions are a basis for building up a universal religion") were also left out because of low factor loadings. As a result, we got a comparative three-factor solution which is equally applicable to Christians and Muslims: monism, commonality pluralism and relativistic pluralism.

If we look at the correlation between the comparative models we have found in our research population of Christian and Muslim students, we notice that monism and commonality pluralism show a low but statistically significant positive correlation (.08). It means that these two models are not opposed. Those who view their religion as the only valid one are rather inclined to agree with the view that there is commonality between different religious traditions. But monism shows a strong negative correlation (-.51) with relativistic pluralism, meaning that these models are strongly opposed. Those who are convinced that their own religious tradition is the only valid one, disagree with the idea that all religions are of equal value and significance, irrespective of any common elements and differences that may exist among them. Finally there is a significant positive correlation (.19) between commonality pluralism and relativistic pluralism. This means that those who focus on the common elements in their pluralistic ap-

proach toward different religious traditions are rather inclined to agree than to disagree that different traditions are equally valuable. When we split up the latter correlation for Muslims and Christians, it is interesting to see that this positive correlation is higher among Muslims (.29) than among our Christian respondents (.08).

Levels of agreement with attitudes towards religious plurality

Once cross-religious comparability is established, one can ask the question whether there are significant differences between Muslims and Christians. Table 2 shows the levels agreement with the attitudes towards religious plurality for Muslims and Christians, and indicates significant intergroup differences.

Table 2: Levels of agreement (mean and standard deviation) with regard to monism, commonality pluralism and relativistic pluralism for Muslim and Christian students.

	Muslims		Christians	
	Valid cases	*Mean (s.d.)*	*Valid cases*	*Mean (s.d.)*
Monism	792	3.68 (.77)	706	2.79 (.90)
Commonality pluralism	770	3.41 (.69)	699	3.40 (.65)
Relativistic pluralism	779	3.13 (1.03)	703	3.73 (.90)

Scale: 1=Totally disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=not sure; 4=Agree; 5= Totally agree
Intergroup differences are significant at p≤.00 level for monism (Scheffé's test: F-value: 11.04) and relativistic pluralism (Scheffé's test: F-value: 14.35).

The model of interpreting religious plurality our Indonesian Muslim respondents – on average – most agree with monism (mean: 3.68), followed by commonality pluralism (3.41) and relativistic pluralism (3.13). Christian respondents on the other hand score highest on relativistic pluralism (3.73), followed by commonality pluralism (3.40) and monism (2.79). Thus the order of agreement with the comparative models of interpreting religious plurality is exactly the opposite for Muslims and Christians. A Scheffé-test shows that the differences between the average levels of agreement of Muslims and Christians are significant for the outer ends of the spectrum: monism and relativistic pluralism. One could interpret these findings from two perspectives. First from the perspective of the content of the religious traditions, and second from the perspective of the relative group size (i.e., majority versus minority) of these traditions in Indonesia.

From the first perspective, one could say that Islam seemingly provides fertile grounds for monistic attitudes, e.g. in convictions such

as the *shahada* (Islamic confession that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is God's messenger), the concept that Muhammad is the chosen one (*al Mustafa*) and the last prophet (*khatam al-anbiya*). Monism may also find support in the orthodox interpretation of the innate human nature (*fitra*) which says that belief in the Oneness or Unity of God (*tawhid*) is the only virtuous path. Without *tawhid*, salvation is impossible.[46]Moreover, any doubt or even refusal to recognize Muhammad as the last prophet is considered as a sin equivalent to apostasy.[47] In short, agreement with monism could well be related with other traditional theological concepts. Would Christianity on the other hand leave more openness for the faithful to interpret the Christian truth claims more modestly?

Second, one could look at these attitudes from the perspective of the relative size of the religious groups involved on the national level. Being the majority religion in Indonesia, Islam can be quite self-confident in emphasizing their truth claim. But although Muslims score highest on monism, at the same time they accept commonality pluralism. Seeming openness towards other religious traditions is quite possible when looking for sameness. As a minority group, Christians support pluralism more than monism, and it is in their interest to do so. Apparently it is in their context more important to pay attention to mutual respect and equality than to find commonalities between traditions or even stress religious superiority.

Social location of models of interpreting religious plurality

The third research question concerns the social location of attitudes towards religious plurality. What are the background characteristics of people that agree with the respective models of interpreting religious plurality? We will look at these background characteristics for Muslims and Christians separately. The descriptions can help us to interpret the significant differences we have found between Muslims and Christians. Of course, such an interpretation is not a statistical causal explanation; but we hope that correlations between monism, commonality pluralism and relativistic pluralism on the one hand, and background characteristics on the other, will help us to formulate further hypotheses on the differences we did find. We used both personal and

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[46] Sachiko and Chittick, *The Vision of Islam*, 145.

[47] Khalid Blankinship, The Early Creed, in: Tim Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, New York 2008, 33-54; Abd al-Rahman Azzam, *The Eternal Message of Muhammad*, Cambridge 1993, 33.

contextual background characteristics to describe where the three models of interpreting religious plurality are prevalent: socio-economic characteristics, religious characteristics and perceived threat. In addition we questioned our respondents about one central religious conviction in their tradition: images of Muhammad for Muslims and images of Jesus for Christians.

Before looking at the results, let us say something more about these background characteristics.[48] Socio-economic characteristics include age, gender, the highest attained education level of the respondents' parents, and location (Ambon or Yogyakarta). Religious characteristics include the father's and mother's involvement in the religious choices of the respondents, the students' participation in religious activities, their involvement with religious organization(s), their participation in religious services and religious activities, frequency of praying, and the number of friends of other religions. Perceived threat indicates to what extent the respondents perceive threats to their needs, interests or concerns in specific domains. Economic threat indicates the extent to which the respondent thinks that there are not enough job opportunities for him/herself or his/her family. Political threat indicates the extent to which one feels oppressed or discriminated against by those with political power. Social threat refers to the respondent's evaluation of the extent he/she and his/her family have free access to all levels of education, and the respondent's explicit preference for confessional schools. Cultural threat means that the respondent thinks that his/her religious values are not respected enough in society, and more specifically that society is too supportive of a hedonistic lifestyle. Finally, we also added some questions about different images of Muhammad for Muslims, and different images of Jesus for Christians. Muslims were asked to what extent they agreed with each of five models of Muhammad found in the Koran, Hadith, Sunnah (the sayings, traditions and customs of Muhammad), Sīra (the history of life and deeds of Muhammad derived from the Hadith), and Islamic theological literature. These five models are: Muhammad as the ultimate Prophet; Muhammad as unique in his closeness to God; as perfection; as a model (*'uswa'*) for today; or as simply a great person in history (humanistic model). Christian respondents in their turn were asked to agree with each of the following images of Jesus: the

[48] The theoretical construction and empirical measurements of the background characteristics and religious convictions are elaborated in Hadiwitanto's PhD dissertation, manuscript 2014. Lack of space obliges us to introduce them only briefly here.

classical Jesus image as the Christ from a Trinitarian perspective; the Spirit-motivated Jesus; Jesus as model for today; and Jesus as nothing more than a great figure in history (humanistic model).

Table 3: Social location of *monism* among Muslim and Christian students.

	Monism	
	Muslims	Christians
Background characteristics		
Socio-economic characteristics		
Age	-.07*	
Religious characteristics		
Father's involvement in religious choice	.14**	.17**
Mother's involvement in religious choice		.15**
Father's involvement in religious activities	.12**	
Mother's involvement in religious activities		.08*
Participation in religious service	.14**	
Participation in religious activities	.11**	
Frequency of praying	.10*	.13**
Number of friends of other religions	.12**	.09*
Perceived threat		
Economic (job opportunity)	.08*	
Political (unfair use power)	-.09*	
Social (education segregation)	.15**	
Cultural (hedonism)	.10**	
Religious convictions		
Images of Muhammad		
Prophet	.17**	
Unique in closeness to God	.29**	
Perfection	.27**	
Uswa (model)	.48**	
Humanistic	-.19**	
Images of Jesus		
Classic		.22**
Spirit-motivated		.09*
Model		.21**
Humanistic		-.11

Correlations (Pearson's r for ordinal variables and eta for nominal variables) are significant at p≤.05 (*) or p.≤00 (**) level. There is no significant correlation between monism and the following variables: gender, father's education level, mother's education level, location and personal involvement in religious organizations.

All these background characteristics were related with our three models of interpreting religious plurality, indicated with the statistical association measure *Pearson's r* for ordinal variables and *eta* for nominal variables. These correlations are shown in tables 3, 4 and 5.

Table 3 shows that monism has several significant, if rather low, associations with background characteristics among Muslims. Still, the tendency is very clear. More agreement with monism can be found among Islamic students that score relatively high on the religious background characteristics. The greater the involvement of parents in religious socialization, the more frequent their mosque attendance and the more frequently one prays, the stronger is one's conviction that the own religion offers the surest way to liberation and that religious truth can be found only in Islam. At first sight, surprisingly, the number of friends of another religious tradition is related with monism. More concretely this means in this context: if Muslims have relatively many Christian friends, this does not weaken their truth claims – on the contrary. This seems to be in line with previous research where the level of multi-religiosity, i.e., the number of believers of another religious tradition in the direct environment, contributes to the (affective) involvement with the own religious tradition.[49] But perceived threat also plays a role: a high level of perceived threat is the locus of monism. More specifically, explicit preference for segregation in confessional schools (.15) and the thought that current society is too hedonistic (.10) is significantly related with monism. Finally, all images of Muhammad are associated with monism. Stronger agreement with Muhammad as model (*'uswa'*) implies more monism (.48). Muhammad as *uswa* means that the life of Muhammad functions as a model to ask and help people to follow God's rule (Sura 33:21). By following Muhammad's life and sayings, his followers can attain the true path to obey God and learn to show their gratefulness to God. Muhammad had the ability to inspire confidence in others (*al-Amin*: the reliable one).[50] Also Muhammad, seen as unique in closeness to God (.29), is related to monism. In this model Muslims remember the unique experiences of Muhammad's night journey (*isra)* and his ascension (*mi'raj*) that culminated in his face-to-face contact with God. In Muhammad as perfection (*r* .27 with monism) Muhammad is seen as a perfect man (*insan kamil*), ideal in nature and with great moral qualities (*khalqan wa khulqan*). The traditional image of Muhammad as the ultimate prophet shows somewhat lower correlation with monism (.17). And finally, it is only a small surprise that the humanistic Mu-

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[49] Sterkens, *Interreligious Learning*, 169-174.

[50] Tariq Ramadan, *The Footsteps of The Prophet. Lessons from The Life of Muhammad*, New York 2007; Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger. The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety*, Chapel Hill 1985.

hammad image is negatively correlated with monism (-.19), since in this model Muhammad is seen as a good and great historical person, but no more than that. This means that the humanistic Muhammad image is opposed to monism.

Table 4: Social location of *commonality pluralism.*

	Commonality pluralism	
	Muslims	Christians
Background characteristics		
Socio-economic characteristics		
Age		.08*
Gender	.14**	.02
Mother's education level	-.08*	
Location	.09*	.09*
Religious characteristics		
Participation in religious service	-.07*	
Frequency of praying		-.11**
Perceived threat		
Cultural (hedonism)		.10**
Religious convictions		
Images of Muhammad		
Prophet	.10**	
Unique in closeness to God	.08*	
Perfection	.07*	
Humanistic	.17**	

Correlations are significant at p≤.05 (*) or p.≤00 (**) level. There is no significant correlation between commonality pluralism and the following variables: father's education level, father's and mother's involvement in religious choice, father's and mother's involvement in religious activities, personal involvement in religious organizations, participation in religious activities, number of friends of other religions, and economic, political and social perceived threat. There are also no significant correlations between commonality pluralism and Jesus images among Christian respondents, neither with 'uswa' among Muslims.

Among Christian respondents we find for the largest part similar results. Here too, more agreement with monism can be found among Christian students that score relatively high on the religious background characteristics. When their parents' involvement in their religious choices is high, it is more likely our Christian students have strong truth claims (.17 for the father's and .15 for the mother's involvement). More frequent praying is also positively related with monism (.13). But unlike Muslims, perceived threat is not an indicator for monism among Christians. Finally, Jesus images are related with monism as well. The classical Jesus (.22), in which Jesus is recognized as the incarnation of God, is positively related with monism (.22). Agreement with 'Jesus as model' in which Jesus is believed to

Introduction

Leo J. Koffeman

Worldwide growth of religious pluralism constitutes one of the major challenges facing all religions, Christianity and Islam included, according to the American legal expert on church-state relations, Prof James E. Wood: "The worldwide distribution of communities of virtually all of the major religious traditions exacerbates the concern of all religions for guarantees of religious liberty and the protection of the religious rights of their own adherents and thereby for religious minorities generally".[1] This asks for political instruments, but it also requires religious communities to enhance dialogue and cooperation: "To be sure, the call for the recognition of religious human rights in the world community needs to be sounded by the religions themselves as well as by instruments of national and international law".[2]

In Indonesia Christians are a minority in terms of their number, whereas the vast majority of Indonesians adheres to Islam. The opposite is true for the Netherlands. Religious pluralism, therefore, challenges both faith communities in both countries to contribute to a fair assessment of the actual situation, and to strengthen joint efforts to further peace and justice. The articles in this section of the book have to be understood from this perspective.

Two Christian theologians give complementary accounts of the way religion-state relations have developed in Indonesia. Julianus Mojau mainly gives an historical survey in terms of institutional rela-

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[1] James E. Wood, Jr., An Apologia for Religious Human Rights, in:. *Religious Human Rights in Global Perspective. Religious Perspectives*, J. Witte Jr. and J.D. van der Vyver (eds). The Hague etc. 1996, 455-483, 482.

[2] Ibid.

tions. After a short reference to early colonial times, he focuses on developments after Indonesian independence. In his conclusion he distinguishes four types of religion-state relations, and finally introduces a fifth model: equal critical partnership, as the preferable solution for Indonesia's future. Zakaria Ngelow also takes his point of departure in historical development, but he focuses on the role religions themselves have to play: without interfaith trust and tolerance no institutional arrangement will be sufficient.

In my contribution to this part, I first of all aim at describing the actual legal framework in the Netherlands, followed by a survey of theological positions. This article concludes with an analysis of recent reports of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands on the democratic constitutional state, and on Christian-Muslim relationships.

The last author in this part on religion and state is Muslim theologian Yaser Ellethy. Although he is doing his research in the context of a Dutch university, his contribution transcends the setting of Western European Islam. In a thorough analysis he seeks to balance two aspects: on the one hand the relevance of the holistic nature of Islam in terms of political life, and on the other hand the fact that Islam does not provide a particular political system of rule. His focus on the concepts of *ummah* and theocracy intends to put well-known misunderstandings in a wider perspective, and so to dismantle them.

Dialogue between Christians and Muslims, in an Indonesian as well as a Dutch context, on these issues only starts with these contributions. At least, the agenda for further common research has become clearer.

The Relation between Religion and State in the Pluralistic Indonesian Society

Julianus Mojau

This article aims to delineate prevailing views of the relation between religion and state as relevant in the context of a pluralistic Indonesian society.

As history shows, Indonesia is one of the countries whose citizens hold diverse religions and beliefs.[1] This historical fact continues to determine social reality.[2] The diversity of religions and beliefs serves as either a blessing or a disaster. In this context, state policies and religious awareness are required in order to establish an amicable and just pluralist society. This is where the importance of productive relations between religion and state lies.

First of all, let me try to show how the relation between religion and state was shaped through the history of Indonesia. In general, we have to note that there are different phases of religion and state relationships in the history of Indonesia. Each of those different phases, even though there are often overlaps, shows a different form. Based on this awareness, this article begins with an historical reading, and concludes with summarizing notes. The different types or models of relationships between religion and the state in Indonesian history will be presented in those final notes. This is done in order to prevent a

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[1] Cf. Bernard H.M. Vlekke, Nusantara: *A History of the East Indian Archipelago*. Cambridge, Massachusetts 1944; also W.F. Wertheim, *Indonesian Society in Transition: A Study of Social Change*, Bandung and The Hague 1956.

[2] Since Abdurrahman Wahid became President (1999), Indonesia has recognized 5 (five) religions, they are: Muslim, Christian (Catholic and Protestant), Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism.

During the first decade of Indonesia's independence, 1945-1955, the spirit of nationalism was directly linked with different parts of Indonesian society. The spirit of nationalism – as the spirit of social, economic and political emancipation – among Indonesian intellectuals in the mid-20th century was so strong that Daniel Dhakidae once remarked that nationalism among Indonesian intellectuals had become their 'new religion'.[9] In this case, the differences in terms of religion and culture had been immersed in a spirit of ethical nationalism. Here, the religions served as religious nationalism.

Religions, as an integral part of Indonesian nationalism, experienced a setback after the first General Elections (*Pemilihan Umum*, 1955) and the Constituent Assembly Convention (*Sidang-sidang Majelis Konstituante*, 1956-1959), especially in the context of the discussion on the philosophical foundation of the *Republik Indonesia*. Religion-based political parties – especially Muslim parties -- wanted Islam to be the philosophical foundation of the Republik Indonesia. Therefore, there was a will to turn Islam into a state religion, like state religion in the history of Christianity in the Middle Ages: although neither the case nor the background are similar, it shows the same spirit. According to Kuntowijoyo,[10] Soekarno – who appeared on the political scene without bringing about a religious ideology – finally stopped the ambition of some Muslim politicians by passing the 5 July 1959 decree.[11] Through this decree, Soekarno, during his 'guided democracy' leadership, wanted to restore the religions in Indonesia as 'religions of Indonesian nationalism', i.e. religions that support the spirit of nationalism and the spirit of revolution.

Soeharto, after taking over power from Soekarno in 1966, ruled until 21 May 1998. He was supported by military power, and he was more systematic in marginalizing Muslim politics.[12] Through his success, Soeharto made religions a power in Indonesian modernization. Soeharto's political modernization ran well for approximately thirty years, because it was fully supported by Indonesian religious activists. Some Muslim and Christian intellectuals and theologians, for example, were the 'keynote speakers' of the modernization process as the

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[9] Cf. Daniel Dhakidae, Memahami Rasa Kebangsaan dan Menyimak Bangsa sebagai Komunitas-Komunitas Terbayang, in: *Imagined Communities Komunitas-Komunitas Terbayang*, terj. Omi Itan Naomi, Benedict Anderson (ed.), Yogyakarta 2001, xvi.

[10] Cf. Kuntowiwijoyo, *Paradigma Islam*, 155.

[11] Cf. Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Islam dalam Bingkai Keindonesiaan dan Kemanusiaan*, Bandung 2009, 135-139.

[12] Cf. M. Rusli Karim, *Negara dan Peminggiran Islam Politik*, Yogyakarta 1999.

implementation of Pancasila.[13] We have to admit that Soeharto in his first decade of rule sought to use religions as a driving force in the modernization process for the development of Indonesian society. This was why some Muslims and Christians intellectuals and theologians were willing to use their religions as the motor/locomotive of Indonesian modernization.[14] Gradually, however, Soeharto's power forced the nation's power to become hegemonic through the 'sole principle politics' (*politik asas tunggal*) as regulated in "Law No 8 year 1985" (*UU Nomor 8 Tahun 1985*) concerning Societal Organization (*Organisasi Kemasyarakatan*). Through these sole principle politics, religions were gradually co-opted and subordinated to the state's authority. As a result, religions lost their autonomy and this weakened the critical attitude of religious intellectuals toward the more demonic state's hegemonic authority. In relation to the more hegemonic authority of this 'New Order', some parties, both Muslim and Christian, tried to articulate a model of religion-state relations that is in accordance with the spirit of liberation theology.[15] Here, religion and state are two different powers that antagonistically confront each other.

After the fall of the New Order regime, religious leaders in Indonesia fought over social-political influence. As a result, political parties with religious labels and principles emerged. Later, this triggered social violence on behalf of religions. The case of Ahmadiyah (a strain of Islam) and the destruction of some places of worship in the last couple of years are the most obvious examples. In such circumstances, the state seems to be very weak and powerless. The state seems to have been subdued by religious sentiments that destroy humanity.

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[13] I have tried to expose this issue in my dissertation (2004) published by BPK Gunung Mulia. Cf. Julianus Mojau, *Meniakan atau Merangkul: Pergulatan Teologis Kristen Protestan dengan Islam Politik di Indonesia*, Jakarta 2012; meanwhile among Muslims, cf. Yudi Latif, *Inteligens Muslim dan Kuasa: Genealogi Inteligensia Muslim Indonesia Abad ke-20*, Bandung 2005.

[14] Among Protestants, for example, we mention T.B. Simatupang and Eka Darmaputra. Cf. T.B. Simatupang, *Iman Kristen dan Pancasila*, Jakarta 1985; id., *Kehadiran Kristen dalam Perang, Revolusi dan Pembangunan: Berjuang Mengamalkan Pancasila dalam Terang Iman*, Jakarta 1986; Eka Darmaputra, *Pancasila: Identitas dan Modernitas – Tinjauan Etis dan Budaya*, Jakarta 1987; for the social-theological view of Eka Darmaputra cf. Martin L. Sinaga et al., *Pergulatan Kehadiran Kristen di Indonesia: Teks-Teks Terpilih Eka Darmaputra*, Jakarta 2001. Meanwhile among Muslims we can mention the social-theological views of Abdurrahman Wahid, Nucholish Madjid, Djohan Efendi, and Lihat Greg Barton, in: *Gagasan Islam Liberal di Indonesia: Pemikiran Neo-Modernisme Nurcholish Madjid, Djohan Effendi, Ahmad Mahib, dan Abdurrahman Wahid*, Abdurrahman Wahid et al. (eds), Jakarta 1999.

[15] Cf., for example, some writings in: *Agama, Demokrasi dan Keadilan*, M. Imam Azis, et al. (eds), Jakarta 1993.

Some people give voice to a separation model of religion-state relations. They emphasize that religion is a citizen's personal affair. Religion is the individual's private issue. However, this model does not get enough support from religious leaders in Indonesia. The religious leaders urge the significance of the role of religions in public space. This role, nevertheless, has to be placed within an awareness of Indonesian nationalism as based on Pancasila, without having to make Pancasila a closed ideology. Among Protestants, for example, A.A. Yewangoe, General Chairman of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia – similarly to what T.B. Simatupang and Eka Darmaputra did at the beginning of the New Order – re-emphasized the effort to support the cause.[16] On the Muslim side, we have Djohan Efendi[17] and Ahmad Syafii Maarif[18]. In the midst of the trend among Muslim politicians to emphasize the significance of the 'Jakarta Charter' (Piagam Jakarta),[19] Ahmad Syafii Maarif, former chairman of Muhammadiyah, wrote as follows:

> In order to strengthen the sense of being Indonesians and the sense of humanity, Piagam Jakarta [Jakarta Charter (read: the goal of state-religion relations, J.M.)] does not need to be viewed from a legal formal perspective. However, the spirit of it, i.e. equal execution of justice for all citizens of Indonesia, without any discrimination, needs to be kept. Meanwhile, Pancasila has to be open to adopt moral sources from the existing religions in Indonesia and Islam has to give a major contribution.[20]

If what Syafii Maarif says above is accepted as representing the majority of Indonesians who yearn to preserve Pancasila as Indonesia's philosophical foundation, we can conclude that religion as the state's ideology has declined, even though Indonesians still consider the significance of the role of religions in Indonesia's social life. Therefore, all efforts to make Indonesia a religion-state (in which the state is subordinated to religion) or a state-religion (in which religion is subordinated to the state), as well as efforts to make religion a personal affair,

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[16] Cf. the trilogy of A.A. Yewangoe, (1) *Tidak Ada Negara Agama. Satu Nusa, Satu Bangsa*, Jakarta 2009; (2) *Tidak Ada Penumpang Gelap: Warga Gereja, Warga Bangsa*, Jakarta 2009; and (3) *Tidak Ada Ghetto: Gereja di dalam Dunia*, Jakarta 2009. All published by *BPK Gunung Mulia*. Cf. also for the Muslim view the debate as discussed in: Abdul Mu'nim D.Z., *Islam di Tengah Arus Transisi*, Jakarta 2000.

[17] Cf. Djohan Effendi, *Pluralisme dan Kebebason Beragama*, Yogyakarta 2011.

[18] Cf. Maarif, *Islam*.

[19] Discussion on Piagam Jakarta (Jakarta Charter) flourished again among Muslim intellectuals after the fall of New Order regime. Cf. Mu'nim, *Islam*.

[20] Maarif, *Islam*, 311.

will not be easily accepted by Indonesian society with its pluralistic culture.

3. Four Types of Religion and State Relations

The historical explanation above, which is more a simplification, shows us that there has never been a separation between religion and state in Indonesia. What we see is four tendencies.

First, a co-optative relation, where the state co-opts religions into legitimacy tools of the state's authority. This is obvious both in the pre-independence and post-independence periods, especially in the Old Order where religions are co-opted into legitimacy tools of chauvinistic nationalism and in the New Order where religions are co-opted into legitimacy tools of an ideological modernization project.

Second, the tendency of a relation of mutual subordination, especially when a particular regime craves to preserve its authority as the absolute power and/or when some parties demand to make religions the state's ideology. This is obvious in both the Old and New Order, and in a particular way it is also present in 'Reformation era' or transition era, after 1998.

Third, the tendency of a symbiotic relation, a mutually beneficial relation pattern. At a first glance, this pattern is very good. However, if we critically read this pattern, it in fact causes religion and state to fall into collusive relationships. The state can protect religious interests provided that the religions do not question the state's authority. In contrast, religions can protect the state's authority interests and/or legitimate the state's projects, no matter how destructive they are, provided that religions can obtain the facilities they need. This tendency is obvious during the Indonesian pre-independence period and in the post-independence period, especially in the New Order.

Fourth, the tendency of an antagonistic relation. Here, religion serves as the power of a people's movement that confronts the state's authority. It is obvious in the Indonesian pre-independence period. In some cases, yet more conceptual, it can be seen in the form of the efforts of some parties in articulating the spirit of liberation theology in the late 1970s and towards the early 1980s.

The four tendencies above will not be enough to help to amicably construct an Indonesian pluralistic society. In the first, second and third tendencies, religions in Indonesia lose their autonomy and prophetic spirit. This makes the state appear so weak that it is incapable

first pillar. This rejection of discrimination and of any tendency to apply Islamic *shari'a* became a crucial point for Indonesian Christian political standpoints in favor of a democratic pluralistic nation. The motivation behind such standpoints is a strong commitment to uphold religious freedom and other human rights principles.

The five Pillars of Indonesian *Pancasila* ideology are:

1. Belief in the one and only God;
2. A just and civilized humanity;
3. The unity of Indonesia;
4. Democracy guided by inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representatives;
5. Social justice for the all of the people of Indonesia.

With Pancasila as its ideology, Indonesia is neither a religious nor a secular state. But the religiosity of the people and the existence of the Divine are recognized in the nation's affairs. Some scholars, therefore, preferred the term "religious democratic society". The state is based on the Omnipotence of the Divinity, and it guarantees the freedom of everyone to have her/his own religion and to perform religious duties according to her/his religion and faith.3 In January 1946, the Ministry of Religious Affairs was founded, initially as a gesture of compensation to the Muslim majority, but then it was assigned to serve the religious interest of all citizens. Recently there are (only) six religions that are officially recognized by the government: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity (Protestant, Catholic), and Confucianism. The last one was added by a presidential decree by Abdurrahman Wahid. Local or indigenous religions were (unfairly) treated as sects of Hinduism.

Among some Indonesian Muslims the ideal of an Islamic state continue to burn. In the past, some separatist rebellious movements were founded in different places (West Java, Aceh, South Sulawesi, South Kalimantan), but all were crushed by military operations. The last decade has seen the influence of global Islamic movements such as the Salawist and Hizbuth Tahrir, and even the radicals, have emerged in Indonesia. But the majority of Indonesian Muslims, including the major Islamic organizations such as Nahdatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, opt for the Pancasila state. Nevertheless, Islamist politicians managed to develop various *shari'a*-inspired regulations at regency or provincial levels. Anti-alcohol policies, a dress code for

[3] Cf. chapter 29 of the Constitution.

women, the ability to read Al-Qur'an, and other regulations have been applied.

3. A Christian Party

Indonesian Christian political thought and practices were developed under the strong influence of a Dutch theologian and statesman, Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) with his party, the *Anti-Revolutionaire Partij*. The main influence of Kuyperian political views on Indonesian Christian political circles was that political powers come from God and have to be accountable to God; that Christians should develop their own potential to be able to compete in the socio-political life of the country; and that freedom of the church (religions) is a basic requirement for a free nation.

From 1945 to 1971, a Christian political party, Parkindo – Indonesia Christian Party – was the only political party among Protestants. Some Christians were active in non-Christian political parties, such as the secular nationalist or communist political parties. Roman Catholics had their own Indonesian Catholic Party. Both merged with other political parties when the New Order regime under Suharto in the early 1970s forced political parties to be limited to only three political parties: the Golongan Karya (Workers Group) as the government party, the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (Development Unity Party) of the Islamic politicians, and the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (Indonesia Democratic Party), into which the Protestant and Catholic parties merged.

After the fall of Suharto, freedom of political expression revived. People organized various political parties to compete in the general elections. Christians were also caught in the freedom euphoria, and founded some Christian political parties. From time to time it was clear that Christians did not support any exclusive religious political party. The same can be seen among Muslims. Another interesting phenomenon was the significant number of church ministers that took part in power politics, and competed for legislative positions at various levels. Some got enough votes, but the majority failed. Churches developed different regulations, but generally a church minister has to choose, either to serve the church or to serve a political party.

But, on the other hand, some churches openly support certain candidates for political positions, such as local or national legislators, regents and governors. This kind of open support is practically jeop-

ardized if the supported candidate loses the election: theologically it betrays the nature of the church as if it were subordinated to certain political interests. It is relevant here to note that Indonesian Christians/churches need a reorientation in order to develop a non-sectarian political interest, and to promote common justice, peace and prosperity.

While Christians politically stand for a democratic and free state, Indonesian church leaders apply Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Rom 13: 1-5 – submission to the government) as their basic attitude with respect to the government. Since the colonial period, Christianity has not developed a critical stance towards the government. Under the New Order, Indonesian churches in the ecumenical movement developed a basic approach to church participation in national development programs. It was a combination of the positive and the creative, and of critical but realistic attitudes. Critical but realistic indicates the application of biblical-theological norms to any program in that its process and goals must be in line with biblical ethics of justice and peace.

4. Intolerance

Since the early 1990s, toward the end of the Suharto regime, interfaith problems emerged. Some churches in various places were burned or attacked. The years following the *Reformasie* of 1998 were the worst, as communal conflicts, connected with religious (i.e. Christian and Islam) identities, broke out in Ambon, Halmahera, Poso and other places, taking thousands of lives and displacing many thousands more.

In the last few years, interfaith intolerance was expressed towards other minority religious groups, such as Ahmadiah and Shi'ite Muslims. Their communities were attacked and banned. People have regretted the increased intolerance, but more than that, deep disappointment was expressed over the government's attitude of indifference to the problem. Security personnel did not protect the victims, and even sided with the attacking mobs. As formulated in the Constitution, the state should guarantee the freedom of each individual to choose and exercise her/his own religion. The government or any religious community has no right to judge any doctrines and practices of another religious community.

Interfaith problems in Indonesia emerged in the late 1960s because church membership increased after the communists were banned, and citizens were obliged to be members of one of the recog-

nized religions in 1966. In the 1970s the government issued regulations on interfaith relations, limiting the freedom to construct church buildings. There are plans to issue a regulation on interfaith harmony; it will probably be more restrictive towards minorities. In the past decade, the government has founded a forum of religious leaders at different levels, in order to develop interfaith harmony, but in most cases the forum functions to legitimize discrimination against Christians and other minorities, denying their right to have buildings for worship.

The bright side of the interfaith situation in Indonesia is the commitment of youth interfaith groups to uphold religious freedom and to develop peaceful cooperation. Since the early 1990s, interfaith groups emerged in various places to develop interfaith dialogue and cooperation, addressing social problems.

It is also significant that a movement has emerged against the tendency to deviate from the original foundations of the Republic. This movement seeks to revive the basic foundations of the nation, i.e. the *Pancasila* (the five pillars), the UUD 1945 (the Constitution), the NKRI (Indonesia as a single republic state), and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in diversity).

As a religiously and culturally pluralistic nation, the future of Indonesia will depend on the healthy development of democracy and freedom, correlating with the socio-economic and education level of the people. The founders of the nation invented *Pancasila* as a good common base for a pluralistic nation. But abuse of power under *Pancasila* in the past has caused people to be confused and to reject the ideology. A revitalization of *Pancasila* is needed – a huge task in the current situation of a country that is characterized by corruption among its power executors.

Religion and State in the Netherlands. A Christian Perspective

Leo J. Koffeman

Hardly any constitutional principle is causing more public discussion in the Netherlands nowadays than the one usually described as 'the separation of church and state'. It is a concept that is being understood in quite different ways, and – in my view – one that is often misunderstood. It is a concept that is supposed to be decisive of the relation between religions and state in most European countries, as part and parcel of the concept of a democratic constitutional state. Nevertheless, the way it is being interpreted and implemented is very different, if we, for instance, compare the situation in the Netherlands with that in neighboring countries like Belgium, France, Germany and the United Kingdom.[1]

In this contribution I intend to focus on three areas. First, I will give a concise description of the way religion and state are mutually related in the Netherlands. Secondly, a survey of theological positions on this issue will be presented, focusing on the official position of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PCN) as visible in two recent reports. In a third and final section, I want to identify the main theological questions that need to be discussed, both in an intra-Christian, intercontextual dialogue and in an interreligious conversation. A provisional personal response to these questions will be included.

It is my hope that this article will contribute to finding common ground in Christian-Muslim dialogue on issues that are immensely

[1] *Cf. Legal Position of Churches and Church Autonomy*, Hildegard Warnink (ed.). Leuven 2001.

relevant, with a view to a just and peaceful future of this world, and more particularly of Indonesia and the Netherlands.

1. A picture of religion-state relationships in the Dutch context

The Netherlands is proud to be a democratic constitutional state under the rule of law. In public debate, nobody would speak against that. Even those who suggest the need for certain constitutional changes like, for instance, the introduction of decisive referenda, only do so by referring to democracy and the rule of law as their criteria.

Usually, five criteria for a truly democratic constitutional state under the rule of law are identified:[2]

The principle of *legality*: in a constitutional state it is justice, not the government, that has final authority: all powers, including the executive, parliament and the judicatory, have to function under the rule of law;

Constitutionalism: the fundamental structures of state are laid down in a Constitution, and they are entrenched, i.e. they can only be amended by means of a special and more complicated procedure (e.g. final decision only after new elections, two-thirds majority vote);

Democracy, i.e. those who bear governmental responsibility, do so by virtue of a mandate given by the citizens, represented by a parliament; basically, all citizens have equal opportunities to determine what should be law;

The inclusion of fundamental *human rights* in constitutional law (preferably in the Constitution as such, including entrenchment), on the same level as the fundamental structures of state; in this respect also the recognition of international treaties/conventions on human rights is relevant; part of it is the protection of cultural, ethnic and religious minorities;

Legal protection, i.e. the separation of executive, legislative and judicatory powers, and the right of all citizens to appeal – within a 'fair trial' framework – to an independent and impartial judicatory against decisions of the executive and the legislative, in order to prevent any kind of arbitrariness of power abuse. For the same purpose, public authorities have the 'monopoly of violence'.

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[2] Cf. Paul Cliteur, De democratische rechtsstaat aan het einde van de geschiedenis, in: *Cultuurfilosofie vanuit levensbeschouwelijke perspectieven*. Edith Brugmans (ed.), Open Universiteit 1994, 9-41.

Basically, the Kingdom of the Netherlands meets these standards, although some aspects of state structures may be challenged, like the fact that citizens cannot go to court to appeal to the Constitution against statutory law, or the fact that the highest court in administrative law, the High Council (*Hoge Raad*), also plays a role in the legislative process. Usually, the system is referred to as a *social* constitutional state, which means that public authorities have an obligation to promote solidarity and well being (education, health care, etc.).

In practice, terms like 'state' and 'government' can cause misunderstanding, as far as these might fail to convey the fact that a complicated system of public authorities, operative on different levels, and differentiated according to executive, legislative and judicatory roles, is in place. Although the Dutch Constitution does not explicitly speak of the 'separation of church and state', the concept is evident from the very fact that churches have no formal place in fundamental structures of state, as presented in the Constitution. This means that the church has no institutionally established responsibility within the governmental system. Churches have no advantages compared with any other institution with regard to their means to influence politics. No church has seats in parliament, like the Church of England in the British House of Lords. No right of approval by the church of any governmental decision is recognized. In this respect Article 1 of the Constitution gives the leading principle:

> All persons in the Netherlands shall be treated equally in equal circumstances. Discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, political opinion, race, or sex or on any other grounds whatsoever shall not be permitted.

Of course, the prohibition of discrimination includes the prohibition of privileges as well. Reciprocally, public authorities have no institutionally established responsibility as to the way churches set up their religious life. The Civil Code recognizes the right of religious communities to organize themselves legally as 'churches' (*kerkgenootschappen*), i.e. as a specific type of legal entities, and, therefore, to be 'ruled by their private charter'.[3] Most Christian churches claim this right. The same goes for the Jewish communities (synagogues). Although Muslim communities (mosques) have equal rights to do the same, they usually prefer the legal form of an 'association' or a civil-law foundation to organize communal life.

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[3] Cf. Art. 2:2 BW (*Burgerlijk Wetboek*, i.e. Civil Code).

The right of Article 2:2 BW is based on the freedom of religion as one of the fundamental rights incorporated in the Constitution as well. Article 6 reads as follows:

> 1. Everyone shall have the right to manifest freely his religion or belief, either individually or in community with others, without prejudice to his responsibility under the law.
> 2. Rules concerning the exercise of this right other than in buildings and enclosed places may be laid down by Act of Parliament for the protection of health, in the interest of traffic and to combat or prevent disorders.

The wording 'religion or belief' (also in Art. 1) includes non-religious world views like humanism. For the religious communities it is important that religious freedom is guaranteed, not only as an individual right but also as a right to manifest one's religion or belief *in community with others*.

The essence of the separation of church and state is given with this constitutional framework. Since the 'liberal revolution' of 1848, church-state relationships have been more or less stable. The separation of church and state implies that the Kingdom of the Netherlands is a secular state. In no way, however, does it as such exclude the possibility of cooperation between civil authorities and religious organizations, although quite a few Dutch opinion leaders use to say so! As long as the principle of equal treatment of all citizens is not violated, cooperation between civil authorities or public institutions and all kinds of private organizations (including churches, synagogues and mosques) is possible; this has developed over the last decades in many areas of society, and all private organizations involved have to meet the same quality standards. Excluding religious organizations in this respect would be as improper as favoring them. Formal cooperation with religious communities exists in several areas. On the national level an Interchurch Contact on Government Issues (*Interkerkelijk Contact in Overheidszaken*, CIO), including a number of subcommittees, takes care of cooperation in specific areas like chaplaincy in prisons, in the army and in hospitals, and the maintenance of our cultural heritage (e.g. monumental church buildings), on behalf of Christian and Jewish communities. Government cooperation with Muslims takes place in a parallel body, the Muslim Government Contact Body (*Contactorgaan Moslims Overheid*). Chaplaincy in prisons and in the army is being taken care of by all religions and beliefs proportionally, and financed by the government. Chaplaincy in hospitals is usually part of normal health care, financed by health insurance. The govern-

ment assists financially in maintaining church buildings of historical value. CIO also forms a platform for advising the government in more general legal issues, e.g., legislation in sensitive ethical areas like euthanasia or family law. Apart from this civil authorities on all levels, from local to national, cooperate with religious (and non-religious) organizations in all areas of life, like education, social work, cultural activities, broadcasting, recreation, and sport.

Religious freedom is not unlimited: it is guaranteed "without prejudice to his responsibility under the law".[4] As long as church law is not blatantly in conflict with civil law or with the Penal Code, churches are free.

In practice, it is the judicatory that has the responsibility to determine the limitations of religious freedom, especially if there is a collision with other fundamental rights. Case law is decisive. What if people appeal to religious freedom in order to stifle the rights of women or homosexuals, or to infringe corporal integrity? From the perspective of case law, so far churches have the right to exclude women from ordination, but Christian schools cannot dismiss homosexual teachers for the sole reason of their sexual orientation. Jews and Muslims are allowed to circumcise young boys, but in the case of female circumcision, the fundamental right of corporal integrity prevails. Many additional issues and case law decisions could be presented, and public discussion on such issues is vivid. For many decades the freedom of religion seemed to be prevalent in nearly all instances, but recently this trend seems to have disappeared.

It cannot be denied that such religious freedom is no longer self-evident in the eyes of many people in the Netherlands. The impact of 9/11 is indisputable, and the same goes for two political murders – Pim Fortuyn, 2002, and Theo van Gogh, 2004 – of which the latter was clearly religiously motivated, with a Muslim background. More recently, the shocking disclosure of sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic Church, has severely damaged the image of religion.

There is no room to give an overall exposition of the developments in society that have led to such major changes in public opinion. It may suffice to say that cultural aspects (individualization, the development of a multicultural and multireligious society), as well as economic aspects (globalization!), and political aspects (European integration) play a role.

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[4] *Constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands*, Art. 6.1.

the (official) churches in the respective countries. Nevertheless, this would prove to be a tense relationship. Emperors and kings and the like would often try to use the official church to promote their worldly interests; similarly the public churches would often try to defend their privileged positions by all available means, including the armed forces of state leadership. The Reformation caused deep divisions in the Christian community, but it did not change this overall pattern: the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* implies that in each territory it is the sovereign who decides on the religious affiliation of his people. As far as mainstream theology deals with such questions, it usually in fact legitimizes this principle. Until far into the 20th century, Reformed theocratic thinking – i.e. the view that governments have to organize life in society in compliance with Reformed principles exclusively – was not at all as marginal as it is nowadays.

It was, however, the upcoming Enlightenment – to be understood against the background of religious wars! – that challenged such positions, and that gradually forced churches to reconsider their theological views. The aforementioned separation of church and state in the 19th century is – at least partially – a fruit of the Enlightenment.

Major changes in theological thinking in this respect were caused by the experiences of the German church under national-socialist rule. The *Theological Declaration of Barmen* (1934) rejects any form of unconditional obedience to pubic authorities. Churches start to see themselves first of all as critical partners of the government, with a vocation to witness to biblical values whenever necessary.

In its third chapter CDCS deals with recent changes in the public domain. It points to the growing importance of the civil society as a part of the public domain, next to the market and the state. It also cautiously raises the question of whether we should not distinguish a third domain, separate from the private and the public domain, i.e. a 'sacred domain', as visible in, for instance, monuments and churches, and in national memorial days: "They refer in various ways to stories, common memories and values which determine society (and which therefore are constantly under discussion in politics and civil society!), but cannot be organized at the same time". The yearly Commemoration of the Dead on the 4th of May, reminding us of the victims of the Second World War, is an example. This 'sacred domain' is inevitably vulnerable.

This chapter also deals with recent trends in society, like individualization, globalization, pluriformity and European integration, and tries to clarify the impact of such developments on the democracy.

More than the aforementioned chapters, the fourth chapter of CDCS is relevant for the issue we deal with here. In charcoal it sketches the theological considerations that could guide the church in redefining its relation to state and society. Since I have had final responsibility in drafting this report, I may rightly be expected to agree with its line of argumentation.

Protestant heritage implies that the government is fundamentally seen as 'instituted by God' and a 'servant of God' (cf. Romans 13), although we are called to obey God rather than human beings (cf. Acts 5:29). In principle, the state – or rather the rule of law – is an instrument in the hand of God, but this does not mean that criticism of authorities and their actions would not be allowed. A massive identification of any specific political order with the will of God is impossible; rather should we say that we can 'recognize' God's merciful care in our democratic order. So, one could say that the terminology of 'recognition' implies a certain reservation: from a Christian perspective a democratic order can certainly be appreciated, but it does not at all preclude serious criticism as to the way a democracy functions or the results of a democratic process of decision making.

This also provides a basis for the responsibility of both the churches and other Christian organizations. Even the term 'theocracy' could be used in this respect: the church is convinced, indeed, that society will prosper if God's laws and promises are being taken seriously in legislation and government. However, because for many the term also suggests – incorrectly! – that the state should obey the church, it is better not to use this terminology in public debate. A basic theme in the Bible like 'the Kingdom of God' first and foremost wants to express the promise-character of the Word of God: in the end peace and righteousness are not the fruit of – and therefore completely dependant on – actions of people, but they reflect a divine promise with respect to the future.

A key question in this context regards the role of church and theology. Is it the calling of the church to provide a theological basis for the democratic constitutional state? Should it present arguments from its tradition to say 'this is how it should be'? History taught us the risks it brings when churches provide a theological legitimacy for a

certain political system. It soon results in the church blessing weapons, or legitimating unjust structures like the apartheid system.

The term 'recognize' is pivotal in this context. The church has learned to recognize in the democratic constitutional state something of God's merciful intentions, as expressed in the Gospel of God's kingdom. The word 'recognize' means to honor the value of the democratic constitutional state in full, but at the same time do justice to the fact that there always remains a great distance between the Christian tradition and today's world in the way they formulate their arguments.

The fourth chapter of CDCS addresses several aspects of this recognition. Without reserve the church recognizes important notions from Scripture in the constitutional state: the idea that the government is bound to 'justice and righteousness' is a motif that constantly returns in the prophetical books of the Old Testament. In this respect, an important anthropological motif is also the awareness of the sinfulness of humankind: unlimited and uncontrolled power often appeals more to the inclination of men to abuse it at the cost of others than to the responsibility to apply it to the benefit of society.

Even more strongly the term 'recognition' is applicable to the church's view of the social constitutional state: justice and righteousness are colored by solidarity, by a kingdom which 'will do justice to the afflicted of the people and save the children of the needy' (cf. Psalm 72:4). Justice is ultimately about human dignity, as a fundamental principle in the discussion on the foundation of human rights.

It is no coincidence that from an historical perspective the development of human rights as we know them started with the recognition of the freedom of religious conviction. It has often been stated that freedom of religion is incompatible with the truth-claim of Christian tradition: a history of bloodshed has been the result of this view. Today, however, the church recognizes an important biblical motif in religious freedom, i.e. the freedom of God's Spirit. Faith is a free gift of God, and that alone already rules out any form of religious coercion. A religious conviction concerns self-evidently a free choice, not enforceable by other people.[10] As a direct consequence the church also recognizes the legitimacy of plural society.

Subsequently, CDCS raises the question from which theological perspective the church can speak of human rights and human dignity. Here, a biblical concept of man, as an impulse for a Christian anthro-

[10] Cf. Dignitatis Humanae, par. 3.

pology, is presented, i.e., biblical talk of man as 'image of God' (cf. Genesis 1:26f., and 9:6). The secret of human dignity exists in three relations, to God, of people with each other, and of men to creation. In Jesus Christ, ultimately the "image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15), this man reaches his destination in full. To some extent, this view can be recognized in the secular concept of human dignity and human rights.

The separation of church and state, and, consequently, the neutrality of the 'secular' state is accepted, as far as it means the government as such does not have a religious preference; it should not imply that the state could choose a specific non-religious world view. After all, the government is impartial: it does not side with one religious or non-religious party against the other. As CDCS says:

> The Protestant Church in the Netherlands ... knows of the corrupting effect which the sharing of political power sometimes had on churches in history. It regards it undesirable to have more possibilities than others in society to let its convictions influence political life. Its strength can only lie in its conviction itself. In that sense the Scripture text "'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty" (Zechariah 4: 6) is guiding.[11]

A comparable position is being taken with respect to the concept of 'popular sovereignty' as a foundational condition of democracy. It is acceptable in its intention of rejecting the idea that worldly powers would rule over people without being accountable to the people involved. It should, however, not be understood as a denial of the significance of God's commandments and promises for society. The church fundamentally accepts the democratic constitutional state, and precisely therefore it maintains the right and the obligation of the church to speak critically of the actions of that government. It does so where necessary, according to its legitimate role in civil society. Chapter 4 of CDCS present an elaborate view of this role, but what has been said so far basically suffices to understand its position.

Given the stand taken in CDCS, there was no need for the synod to deal extensively with the same issues in the Islam memorandum *Integrity and Respect* (IAR). It may suffice to point to some references to these issues that implicitly show how CDCS should be read as its background.

The IAR report refers to the position of Christians in the Islamic world and to the Sharia as issues western Christians are concerned

[11] CDCS, par. 87.

about, as they are perceived by some as a threat to the democratic constitutional state. Is not the intention to conquer and to rule the world characteristic of the nature of Islam?[12]

However, the report recognizes that different views exist within Islam on the position of the state, on life as a minority among a non-Islamic majority, on the position of minorities such as Christians and Jews, and on the missionary character of Islam as well.[13]

Under the heading 'Islam and politics: theocracy' the report states: "The strong emphasis on Tawhid in Islam also implies the close relationship between faith and politics"[14] It will certainly be worthwhile to hear an Islamic response to this (quite generalizing) statement. The report continues:

> The Sharia contains God's will for life in its entirety and thus for society as well. The interweaving of religion and politics can be traced back to the role of Muhammad in the second part of his acting, in Medina. Therefore the Islamic state based on Sharia is the ideal for several mainstreams in Islam. In the Islamic community there is a debate going on about the consequences of this. This is caused by the fact that Sharia is not an unambiguous written book of law, but rather a collection of principles and regulations. What an Islamic state looks like is therefore dependent on the type of law school one subscribes to. It depends also on the question whether (re)interpretation of classic principles is possible today in a completely different culture. Some may point out that Islam is a political Islam by definition; others try to distinguish religion and politics more from each other.[15]

An important point of concern in this respect regards the impossibility for Muslims to abandon their religion:

> Although the Qur'an states that there should be no pressure with respect to religion (Al-Baqara, Sura 2:256), according to all Sunnah law-schools it is impossible to change from Islam to, for example, Christian faith. In general this calls for the death penalty. On this point there is a debate within the Islamic community on the possibility of re-interpretation of the rules in the modern setting.[16]

Further, the question is raised whether Islam is not inherently a threat to Western free democratic society. The report states:

> It is not a realistic expectation that the Netherlands will shortly be Islamic or that the country will be forced to live under Islamic authority. At present the

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[12] Cf. *Integrity and Respect*, Ch. 2.A.i.d.
[13] Cf. op. cit., Ch. 3.A.
[14] Op. cit. Ch. 3.B.iv.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Op. cit., Ch. 3.B.iv.

> percentage of Muslims in the Netherlands is too small for that (about 5 – 6 %). Moreover, the majority of the Muslims support the Dutch rule of law and democracy. This majority experiences no problem in professing their faith within the present Dutch context. For most Dutch Muslims an Islamic state is not their primary concern, apart from the question what kind of state this should be.[17]

As to the existing fears in this respect among a great part of the native non-Islamic Dutch people, the report makes three points:

> (1) Like Christianity, Islam is a 'missionary' religion. Islam strives for the ideal that every human being submits to God in the manner of Islam. Even if some Muslims in the Netherlands do not emphasize this very much, it is innate to classic Islam. (2) Within Islam there are movements that advocate peaceful means in this missionary objective. These peaceful means vary from inviting and convincing people to become Muslim till participation in the democratic process to reform society and, if possible, to rule. (3) Beside that the view occurs that conquering countries and people by force and violence is justified and even is called for.[18]

The report emphasizes that there is intensive discussion on this issue within Islam.

4. Some personal theological considerations

I have already made clear above that I fully endorse the position CDCS takes with regard to the relationship of religion and state. Therefore, let me conclude with some questions for further debate, as well as some suggestions for continued consideration.

Christian theological views regarding religion and state have considerably changed through history, and even today they can differ according to different contexts. In other words: Christian theology is contextual theology. The findings above suggest that the same would be true for Islamic theological views. That raises the question whether it is possible to identify some (common?!) guiding principles with regard to such contextual theological thinking.

From a slightly different perspective, the same question could be phrased in hermeneutical terms: is it possible for Christian and Muslim theologians (even in very different contexts) to identify more common ground as to the basic rules of the interpretation of sacred texts?

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[17] Op. cit., Ch. 3.C.i.

[18] Ibid.

I want to underline the issue of the role of religions in public debate. As I pointed to above, there is a tendency in our secular society to see religion as a completely private issue. From that perspective, religious views are supposed to be irrelevant in public debate. If so, this is supposed to be implied in the separation of church and state. I, however, fully endorse the view of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands that not only civil society as a matter of course has to leave room for religious convictions, but that society would, indeed, be seriously impoverished if such room would not be fully recognized and guaranteed. Religious traditions have a potential to enrich human life, notwithstanding the fact that they also have a potential to endanger society. It is up to religious communities to take responsibility – if possible joint responsibility! – in this respect.

German social ethicist Wolfgang Huber, speaks of the 'openness for foundation' (*Begründungsoffenheit*)[19] of human rights, and, therefore, of the democratic constitutional state as such. It implies that for its legitimacy democracy necessarily has to depend on the way secular and non-secular worldviews are able to give it theoretical plausibility within the faith framework of varying communities in plural society. CDCS presents the same conviction, where it says:

> Especially in a plural society there is no self-evident consensus on such a fundamental question as the one concerning the most profound meaning of human rights. Therefore there is not one – accepted by everyone, universally valid – philosophical, theological or religious starting point for human rights. Each religious or (non-religious) philosophic conviction can have a private view here, based among others on a private concept of man.[20]

In principle, all religions may be expected to consider the question if they can do so.

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[19] Cf. Wolfgang Huber, Review of F. Hafner, 'Kirchen im Kontext der Grund- und Menschenrechte', in: *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 119, 1994, 370-372, 371.

[20] CDCS, par. 82.

Islam and the State. Renegotiating the Politics of Ummah and Theocracy

Yaser Ellethy

Since the 19th century, the emergence of an Islamic model of Renaissance characterized almost all the national and transnational reform projects in many Muslim countries. This model always presented itself as a guaranteed premise of prosperity and success. Nonetheless, any political involvement of Islam is rejected, not only by liberal and secular streams, but also by some modern Muslim scholars. Such an Islam-state relation creates fears about two main hypothetical consequences of the establishment of a so-called "Islamic state". The first fear concerns the transnationalization of Islam and the ambitions of some Muslim movements to revive the period of the Caliphate and unify the Muslim *ummah*, as a community of all believers under one political power. The second fear concerns the establishment of a theocratic state where no room is allowed for personal freedom, human rights and democratic apparatuses to guarantee the free choice of the people in the selection and evaluation of their political authorities.

In this article, we will question the credibility of an image of Islam that would imply a *de facto* concrete socio-political system based on textual sources and theological approaches. To understand the Islamic approach to modern state, democracy and secular political principles, we must first explore the fundamental theological and philosophical background of political thought in Islam. This will enable us to set the relation between Islam and the state in the context of a developing and evolving Islamic political thought, which is controlled by textual authority, but endeavors to respond to modern challenges. Therefore, I will begin by discussing the political involvement of Is-

lam and the Muslim conceptualization of the idea of state. Thereafter, I will deal with the hermeneutics of the term *ummah* and its national and transnational dimensions. Finally, I will examine the credibility of linking an Islamic political system with the concept of theocracy.

This paper aspires to contribute to the understanding of the relationship between religion and politics in Islam and the implications of this relationship in the shaping and institutionalization of the state.

1. The dilemma of Islam and politics

Throughout its long history, Islam has motivated and inspired individuals and groups with political ideas, and it continues to do so.[1] As I mentioned in the introduction, Islam turned its universal message into a geopolitical entity. The paradigm *par excellence* of the socio-political organization of a Muslim society was the Medina state under the leadership of the Prophet. After his death, the three decades of the Rightly-Guided Caliphate (632-661), as the name clearly indicates, also constituted a model of government in Islamic political thought. This period, especially at the end of the caliphate of Othman (644-456), witnessed great political troubles that reached the extent of schismatic upheavals and civil war. Nonetheless, all the negativity of the period remained less significant, traditionally, if compared with the noble and pious genius of the four great companions-Caliphs. Their excellence and uprightness, stated by the Qur'an and the Sunnah for all the *ṣaḥāba*,[2] granted the whole period an epic dimension. Furthermore, the period between the establishment of the Umayyad dynasty (661) and the fall of the last manifestation of an Islamic Caliphate, represented in the Ottoman Empire (1923), presented a wide array of political experiences. Throughout all these experiences – i.e. the diversity of political systems, state organization, and institutional structure building – Islam remained a common characteristic. During this long political path, Islam and its Sharia constituted the doctrinal incentive and the legislative impetus behind a civilizational project based on the geopolitical unity of one nation (*ummah*). If this was clearly the historical case, where, then, does the tension in the discourse on political and apolitical Islam arise? To answer this question

[1] Antony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought*, Edinburgh 2010, xvi.

[2] In the Hadith methodology, the strict criterion of ʿadāla (uprightness/probity) –as one of the principal characteristics necessary for the reliability of a narrator (*rāwi*) of a Prophetic tradition together with his/her precision (*ḍabṭ*) – does not apply for the *ṣaḥāba*. They are all considered *ʿudūl* (upright).

we need to look closely at the very nature of the relation between religion and politics in Islam. To support a political involvement of Islam is part of the Muslim conception of the holistic nature of the last divine guidance.[3] The "last", here, refers in the Islamic view to the "perfect" religion, which covers all affairs:

> This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion (Al-Mā'ida, 5.3); And We revealed the Book [Qur'an] to you as an exposition of all things, a guidance and mercy and good tidings for those who submit themselves [as Muslims] (Al-Naḥl, 16:89)

In his commentary on the first part of the last verse ("and We revealed the Book to you as an exposition of all things"), Ibn Kathir reports the interpretation of Ibn Mas'ūd who says that "He [God] has elucidated for us in this Qur'an everything and every knowledge". He refers to the interpretation of Mujahid as well, who says that it is about "everything permissible and impermissible (*ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*)". Ibn Kathir comments that the interpretation of Ibn Mas'ūd is more generic and comprehensive, because "The Qur'an includes every kind of useful knowledge of the past and that which is yet to come; every *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*; and all that the people need in their mundane affairs, their religion and the Hereafter".[4] The modern commentator Al-Shaarawi (d. 1998) interprets the "exposition of all things" also as everything humankind needs. He puts a rhetorical question that might be asked in reaction to this verse: "If someone says: if it is so, why do we ask the scholars [*'ulamā'*] to exert *ijtihād* in order to extract a certain ruling for us?" He replies to the question in a way that represents the Muslim conception of the comprehensive constitutional nature of the Qur'an, the integral role of the Sunnah in Islam and the process of *ijtihād*:

> We say: the Qur'an came as a miracle and a method of fundamentals (*manhaj fī al-uṣūl*). Allah the Almighty gave His Messenger (pbuh) the right to legislate: He says 'And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it. And whatsoever he forbids, abstain (from it)' [Al-Hashr, 7]. Thus the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh); his saying, deed or confirmation is underpinned by the Book. It explains and clarifies it. [...] The Prophet (pbuh) clarified this issue when he sent Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal as a judge for the people of Yemen and wanted to be ascertained concerning his judicial qualifications. He [the Prophet] asked him: 'what would you use to judge [among people]?' He [Mu'ādh] replied: 'by Allah's Book'. The Prophet asked him again: 'what if you don't find [a

[3] On the concept of the holistic nature of Islam (*shumūl al-Islam*) in the context of politics, cf. Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, *al-Dīn wa al-Siyāsa* (Religion and Politics), Dublin 2007, 53-62.

[4] Ibn Kathir, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān al-Aẓīm*, Cairo 2003, vol. II, 725.

> relevant legal ruling in a Qur'anic text]?' He replied: 'then, according to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah' The Prophet said: 'What if you don't find [a ruling to deduce from the Sunnah]?' He replied: 'then I will use my independent judgment [*ajtahid ra'īyi*] and I won't spare any effort'. The Prophet (pbuh) said: 'All praise is for Allah who guided the messenger of the Messenger of Allah to that which pleases Allah and His Messenger'. Thus *ijtihād* is taken from God's Book. For every new issue we face, whereupon there is no text neither in the Qur'an nor in the Sunnah, we are permitted to practice *ijtihād*.[5]

Even if the scriptural background on politics in Islam is not so explicit, the Prophetic tradition, seen as the practical clarification of the Qur'an, is to be taken as a model. If we explore the Qur'anic revelation, we hardly find direct or explicit texts of political systematic ideology. However, the generic and maximal nature of some relevant Qur'anic verses has inspired many Muslim scholars with regard to the role of the last divine guidance in the organization of all mundane human affairs. No clear demarcation is made between the political and the social. Politics and state affairs in the Muslim conception, as in pre-modern Europe, were not conceived as a category separate from other activities but as an integral part of religion.[6]

Nevertheless, the historical moment is another significant factor in the emergence of a political aspect of Islam. Presently, this aspect is predominant in modern relevant debates within and outside the Muslim world. We do not even speak of a political aspect of Islam but of a "political Islam".[7] The salient aspects of contextualizing a certain interpretation of the divine revelation, including politicization, are mainly dependent on periods of relevant historical and transitional crises. This is almost general in theological hermeneutics, as the reflection on faith is not independent from the cultural and socio-economic circumstances.[8] Both the modern Islamic reformism and the emergence of an Islamic project of renaissance are reflections on a status quo of decay

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[5] Muhammad Mutwalli Al-Shaarawi, *Tafsīr Al-Shaarawi*, Dar Akhbar Al-Youm, Cairo 1991, vol. 13, 8148f.

[6] Black, *The History*, 5.

[7] Cf. Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, *min Fiqh al-Dawla fi Al-Islam*, Cairo 2009, 88 ff., where he, on the one hand, refuses the label "political Islam" which makes it look like there are different "Islams" , and, on the other, says that Islam cannot be but political, i.e. involved in politics.

[8] Cf. Muhammad Khalid Masud, The Doctrine of *Siyāsa* in Islamic Law, *Recht van de Islam*, n. 18, 2001, 4f.: "Significantly, the doctrine [*siyāsa*: politics] surfaced usually at the times of political crisis in Islamic history"; Henk Vroom, Understanding the Gospel contextually: Legitimate and Suspect?, in: Christine Lienemann-Perrin et al. (eds), *Contextuality in Reformed Europe: The Mission of the Church in the Transformation of European Culture*, Amsterdam and New York 2004, 35.

and corruption. The general political context presupposes a specific political contextualization of faith. This can be exemplified by the following Qur'anic verse:

> Say: Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds; No partner has He: this am I commanded, and I am the first of those who bow to His Will (Al-An'aām 6:162-163).

The verse is revealed in response to the pagans' devotion of sacrifices to idols and not to Allah, the One and Unique God. Hence, the Prophet is addressed to declare the uniqueness of God as the compass of all human actions, not only those of sacrifice. The classical exegetes like Al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, Al-Qurtubi and Ibn Atiyya do not show much concern for the implications of this verse in a particular political context.[9] Nevertheless, Qutb, in his exegesis, utilizes the verse in his theorization of the concept of God's sovereignty (*ḥākimiyya*) and the unique authority of his legislation, as a continuation in the context of the previous verses. He writes:[10]

> This *dīn* cannot mingle with other beliefs and conceptualizations, nor can its Sharia and system mingle with other doctrines, positions and theories. There can be no double description of any law, position or system, Islamic and something else! Islam is only Islam; Islamic Sharia is only Islamic Sharia. The Islamic social, political or economic system is only Islamic.[11]

To speak about an "Islamic social, political or economic system" makes it sound like a concrete religious textual code that determines different institutional details. This is, however, not necessarily the case. The Qur'an is a book of divine guidance for all of humanity, which surely includes the human status in its different aspects and contexts. Therefore, the establishment of some legislative norms, especially in economic and socio-political issues, was intended to cover the principal and generic rules without specifications. The sub-issues and the details of application of those principles are left to the human reasoning in the proper context, as long as this happens in conformity

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[9] Even among later and modern exegetes, like Al-Shawkani (d. 1834), Ibn Ashour (d. 1972), Al-Shaarawi, 1998 and others, the interpretation of the verse is more linked to the occasion of revelation and the principle of maximal devotion to God.

[10] Al-An'aām 6: 159f.: "As for those who divide their religion and break up into sects, thou hast no part in them in the least: their affair is with Allah: He will in the end tell them the truth of all that they did. He that doeth good shall have ten times as much to his credit: He that doeth evil shall only be recompensed according to his evil: no wrong shall be done unto (any of) them".

[11] Sayyid Qutb, *fī Ẓilāl Al-Qur'ān*, Cairo 2003, vol. III, 1239.

with the objectives of the general legislation. In this context, it can be expected that some Qur'anic verses would have generic connotations of their specific text to a general mundane issue. The exegetic rule concerning the Qur'anic science of *asbāb al-nuzūl* (the occasions/reasons of revelation) teaches that the text trespasses the specificity of the occasion with a view to the general objective. Generally, the aforementioned verse is used argumentatively, among other verses, in many of the Muslim modern debates on the relation between Islam and politics to illustrate the holistic nature of the *dīn* of Islam.

The term "religion" (*dīn*), as far as Islam is concerned, has always been and remains widely perceived by the majority of Muslims as something beyond the spiritual and ritual acts of devotion to God. That Islam is a belief and a way of living simultaneously, a *dīn* and a *dunia* (worldly life), rituals (*ibadāt*) and acts of dealing (*mu'amalāt*) are common prototypical syntheses either in the literatures of the Muslim intelligentsia, the daily religious debates, the Muslim media or in the discussions with many average Muslims. This is perhaps what gives the word "religion" a meaning that is difficult to be conceived in the context of secularism and modernity. M. Watt has noticed how the meaning of the term "religion" *dīn* in Islam and its world differs from the way many understand it in the modern Western world:

> For what does 'religion' now mean to the occidental? At best, for the ordinary man, it means a way of spending an hour or so on Sundays in practices which give him some support and strength in dealing with the problems of daily life, and which encourages him to be friendly towards other persons and to maintain the standards of sexual propriety; it has little or nothing to do with commerce or economics or politics or industrial relationships. At worst it fosters an attitude of complacency in the more prosperous individuals and breeds smugness. The European may even look at religion as an opiate developed by exploiters of the common people in order to keep them in subjection. How different from the connotations to the Muslim of the verse 3.19: 'he true religion with God is Islam'! The word translated as 'religion' is *dīn*, which in Arabic commonly refers to a whole way of life. It is not a private matter for individuals, touching only the periphery of their lives, but something which is both private and public, something which permeates the whole fabric of society in a way of which men are conscious. It is – all in one – theological dogma, forms of worship, political theory, and a detailed code of conduct, including even matters which the European would classify as hygiene or etiquette.[12]

[12] Montgomery Watt, *What is Islam*, New York and Washington 1968, 3.

Strikingly, Islam has developed and presented a different experience and political model in comparison to Judaism and Christianity. What makes the difference in the case of Islam is the idea of congruence between the spiritual and the political. A. Black put it as follows: "Muhammad's point was precisely that earlier theism, though humanitarian in principle, had failed to come to terms with the problem of power".[13] Similarly, K. Armstrong has underlined the fact that politics had never been central to early Christian religious experience, while it was no secondary issue for Muslims.[14] Islam had from its very earliest days a significant political involvement already by the establishment of the first Muslim state in Medina. The Prophet acted as a statesman, albeit never as a king or even a head of state, who was eager to unite this tribal community through a new, tight and unprecedented bond of social contract. The constitution of Medina substituted the clan system of the pre-Islamic era with a new citizen concept, which is considered a major step towards the constitutional state system.[15] What is known as the *Ṣaḥīfa* of Medina, with its detailed constitutive agreement, represents the detribalization of society and the emergence of a political system with a moral mission. This process achieved, rapidly, a significant transition into an organized Empire of Faith. Therefore, it can be clearly concluded that Islam has long been involved in the issue of power and government.

However, Islamic jurisprudential thought does not lack scholars who reject any involvement of Islam as a religion in the question of political authority and government. One year after the abolition of the Islamic Caliphate represented in the Ottoman Empire (on 3 March 1924), the Egyptian Azharite jurist Ali Abdulraziq issued his most controversial work on *Islam and the Fundamentals of Rule*.[16] He argues in his book that government in an Islamic state can be of any kind, even a dictatorship, a democracy, a socialist government or a Bolshevist one. According to Abdulraziq the Prophet was only God's Messenger with a purely "religious" call, and without any tendency to establish a state or seek authority; the leadership of the Prophet was

[13] Black, *The History*, 9f. He argues that "Judaism had preached an all-embracing [ethnic] law, while Christianity had preached spiritual [universal] brotherhood. But neither seriously addressed the problem of military power and political authority".
[14] Karen Armstrong, *Islam. A Short History*, New York 2002, 157.
[15] Cf. Yaser Ellethy, Gelijkheid en Verscheidenheid in een Islamitisch Perspectief, *Christen Democratische Verkenningen*, Summer 2011, 99.
[16] Ali Abdulraziq, *Al-Islam wa Uṣūl al-Ḥukm: Baḥth fi al-Khilāfa wa al-Ḥukūma fi Al-Islam*, Cairo 1925.

necessary for the accomplishment of his message and had nothing to do with government. Upon its publication, the views in this book generated much opposition and criticism in the academic and religious circles inside and outside Egypt.[17] The commotion eventually led to the dismissal of the sheikh and jurist from his posts by the unanimous decision of the High Corps of Scholars (*'ulamā'*) and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar on 12 August 1925. The list of condemnations addressed to him by the same Corps included seven accusations. The most important were: making the Islamic Sharia a mere spiritual legislation irrelevant to rule issues; claiming that the political system in the Prophetic period was obscure and equivocal; and that the main mission of the Prophet was the dissemination of God's law devoid of rule; denial of the consensus of the *ṣaḥāba* that a political leader should be assigned to ordain the religious and mundane affairs of the *ummah*; and claiming that the government of the first Caliph Abu Bakr and his followers was non-religious.[18] The outcome of the critiques against Abdulraziq's book can be summarized in the fact that Islam produced through the Qur'an and the Sunnah general rules for the political system that portray the main characteristics of a Muslim state. Those rules might be characterized as general or broad, but they still can form a certain Islamic political ideology.

Moreover, mottos like "Islamization of politics" or "politicization of Islam", "religious state" (*dawla dinīyya*), or exploitation of religion to rise to power, still prevail in the rejection of any form of a *political* Islam within countries with Muslim majorities. In the aftermath of the so-called Arab Spring in countries like Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, the emergence of Muslim movements and political parties to power has been a common denominator. Nonetheless, on the level of debates within the public domain, secular and liberal streams[19] are

[17] For the relevant literature cf. Selim Al-Awwa, *fī al-Niẓam al-Siyāsi li al-Dawla al-Islamiyya*, Cairo 2006, 113 ff.

[18] Cf. Muhammad Imara, *Al-Islam wa Uṣūl al-Ḥukm li Ali Abdulraziq: Dirāsa wa Wathā'iq*, Beirut 2000, 21f. Later on, according to Imara, Abdulraziq reviewed his opinions and refused the republication of his book. Id., *Naqḍ Kitāb Al-Islam wa Uṣūl al-Ḥukm li Sheikh Al-Islam Muhammad Al-Khidr Hussein*, Cairo 1998, 5f.; cf. id., *Fikr al-Tanwīr bayna al-'Almāniyyīn wa al-Islāmiyyīn*, Cairo 1993, 40-44, where he claims, according to contemporary witnesses, that Abdulraziq confessed that not he was behind the views in the book but the Egyptian intellectual Taha Hussein. This is hard to believe especially when the sheikh himself should have used such allegation during his trial.

[19] In fact, speaking about secular, modernist and liberal streams in the Muslim world is, in its major part, a bit different from how the West identifies such concepts. For example, many of the Muslim liberal and secular trends can hardly reject room for the 'principles' of Islamic

struggling to prove that religion (Islam) cannot offer a system of government today simply because of the lack of a unified Islamic political model, not to mention the diversity and controversies between the different Islamic parties. According to this perspective, the involvement of religion in politics had produced catastrophic consequences in the history of Islamic political development, even during the Rightly-Guided Caliphate; Islam as a pure and divine faith should remain distant from the manipulative and unmoral realm of politics. However, even Muslim "modernizing elite" continue to regard Islam as an important and a fundamental part of their identity.[20]

To make a point out of the two main streams concerning the political involvements of Islam, one can conclude that it is far beyond historical truth that the Prophet separated religion and the political organization of the Muslim state.[21] Similarly, the very notion of *khilāfa* was a *succession* of the Prophet in safeguarding religious and mundane affairs of the Muslim *ummah*. Historically, Islam, embodied in the person of the Prophet, presented the legislative, ethical and constitutional fundamentals that permeated the whole structure of all the Caliphate-oriented state experiences. This happened consciously, and it embodied an Islamic ideal which does not separate the religious and the human, the Hereafter and the here and now, the spiritual and the mundane, or, more specifically, between the private and the public. The separation between religion and state in Muslim political history took the form of the independence of the *'ulamā'*, the development of the different law schools and religious groups without governmental control. In Islam, religious and political life developed distinct spheres of experience with independent leaders and organizations.[22] The Islamic political thought was never concerned about a "political" Islam

Sharia in the post-totalitarian new constitution in Egypt. This can be attributed, mainly, to the significant role Islam plays in the public domain, and its central position in the collective culture, something which imposes a certain "political attitude" in the communication with public opinion. Thus, the polarization on the side of the secular streams tends to define itself in terms of antagonism with "Islamists", as opportunists in the name of religion, and not with "Islam".

[20] Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change*, Princeton 2002, 88. He argues: "That relations between the 'ulama and the modernizing elite [...] have typically remained tense is not for any lack of the latter's professions of commitment to Islam. [...] Indeed, they have sometimes outdone each other in acknowledging the principle that Islam ought to play a prominent role in public life".

[21] Cf. Al-Qaradawi, *min Fiqh al-Dawla*, 16.

[22] Ira Lapidus, *The Separation of State and Religion in the Development of Early Islamic Society*, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 6, n. 4, October 1975, 364; cf. also Al-Awwa, *fi Al- Al-Nizām*, op. cit., 121.

modern state. Firstly, according to Al-Awwa,[40] they should not be excluded from political positions for which they can have the qualifications, even in non-religious fields. Secondly, an Islamic scholar, even if he were the greatest of his age, is not eligible to be involved in politics unless he has the required knowledge and expertise.

> In fact, the Islamic tradition promoted the idea of the distance between the *ulamā'* and the rulers as established on some Prophetic hadiths. Al-Suyuti (d. 1505) wrote a relevant treatise on *The Dispraise of Coming to Those in Charge and the Rulers.*[41] He compiles in this work a plethora of Prophetic traditions related to this idea. Indicatively, some narrations report that "whoever comes to the doors of the rulers would be tempted"; "the more the servant is closer to the ruler the more he is distant from Allah"; "there will be [some] rulers after me. Whoever visits them and believes their lies and supports them in their injustice, does not belong to me nor do I belong to him, and he will not approach the Cistern (*Ḥawḍ*). And whoever does not visit them nor believe their lies nor support them in their injustice, (he) belongs then to me and I belong to him and he will approach the Cistern". The reason, as Al-Manawi (d. 1621) explains, is the fear that the *'ālim* may become corrupt and hypocrite, under the influence of the political authority.[42]

Looking at the Sunnah, we find that the Prophet himself was reluctant to receive any expression of authoritarian reverence usually given to the kings and Caesars of his era. A hadith reports that when a man was trembling and stuttering before him feeling the solemnity toward the person of God's Messenger, he addressed him saying:

> Be at ease! I am not a king. I am but the son of a woman of Quraish who used to eat the meat dried in the sun.[43]

He was also eager to advise his commanders (*umarā'*) to be careful that when they lay siege to a fort, and its people ask for God's judgment/rule (*ḥukm Allāh*), to clarify that they use their own judgment, as *ijtihād*, because they would be uncertain whether this will meet God's judgment.[44] The separation between the realm of human *ḥukm* and that of the Divine *ḥukm* is clear. Following the Prophetic period, Is-

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[40] Al-Awwa, *fi Al-Niẓām*, 121.

[41] Al-Suyuti, *ma Rawāh al-Asāṭīn fi Dhamm al-Majī' ila al-Umarā' wa al-Salāṭīn*. Tanta 1991. He dedicates a chapter (89 ff.) to reports on how the first generation of the *ṣahāba* and the *tabi'īn* used to avoid public offices especially in judiciary (*qaḍā'*) out of piety and fear of the huge responsibility before God.

[42] Al-Manawi, *Fayḍ al-Qadīr Sharḥ al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaghīr*. Beirut 1972, vol. III, 121; Al-Suyuti, *ma Rawāh*, 7.

[43] Al-Albani, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi' al-Saghīr*. Beirut 1988, vol. II, hadith 7052, 1185.

[44] Moslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Kitab al-Jihād, hadith 1731. Cf. also the explanation in Al-Nawawi, *al-Minhāj fi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Moslim Ibn Al-Hajjāj*. Amman 2000, 1116.

lamic terms like *khilāfa* (succession/vicegerency), *imāma* (leadership, imamate),[45] *ri'aāsa 'āmma* (public leadership) are all identical words that came to be for the notion of the higher political authority entrusted to a Muslim ruler. Al-Mawardi (d. 1058) defines it as "succession of prophethood in the guardianship of religion and management of the worldly affairs".[46] Furthermore, none of the first four orthodox Caliphs of Islam, with their period seen as the exemplary Rightly-Guided Caliphate, claimed infallibility with regard to his political authority, or claimed that he represents God on earth. In fact this has never happened in the early history of Islamic political thought. They were just the successors of the Prophet who took on the authority to deal with the issues of the *ummah*. That is why the first Caliph, Abu Bakr (632-634), replied to those who called him '*khalifatu*' *lla'* (Allah's agent/inheritor on Earth) by saying: "I am not the *khalifa* of Allah, but the *khalifa* [successor] of Allah's Messenger"[47] He also began his authorization to be in charge of the Muslim community with the following words: "I have been entrusted with authority over you, while I am not the best among you. If I do good, support me. If I do wrong, correct me".[48] The Caliphs, especially Abu Bakr and Omar, were eager to start their messages by a formula which emphasizes that what follows implies their own views, lest it would be understood that they attribute it to God.[49]

If we claim that Islam denies and opposes every form of theocracy, the concept of *ḥākimiyya*, 'sovereignty of God', can hardly escape our notice in this respect. The concept is sometimes believed, by scholars like Qutb and Ai-Maududi, to have arisen in modern times, although the origin of the religious slogan that grants validity to this concept can be traced back to early Islamic history. The story goes back to the events of what was called *al-Fitna al-Kubra* (the Great Upheaval), which brought the Caliphate system to an end and commenced a new era of dynastic rule in Islam. When the Kharijites (*khāwarij*) refused the authority of human arbitration between the

[45] The term *imamate* is more linked to the Shiite political literature and bestows more "holy" characteristics on the person of the Imam according to his genealogy as a member of the Prophetic household and to the concept of '*isma* (infallibility, sinlessness).
[46] Al-Mawardi, *al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyya*, Cairo 2006, 15. He defines the term *imāma*, which is, in the Sunni conception, a synonym of the *khilāfa*; cf. the editor's (A. Jad) note, footnote 1.
[47] Op. cit., 39.
[48] Ibn Hisham, *al-Sīra*, vol. IV, 312.
[49] Taha Jabir Al-Ilwani, Taṣdīr: Ḥākimiyya Ilahiyya am Ḥākimiyyat Kitāb? in: Hisham Jaafar, *al-Ab'aād al-Siyāsiyya li Mafhūm al-Ḥākimiyya*, Herndon-Virginia 1995, 32.

fourth Caliph Ali Ibn Abi Talib (656-661) and his rebel governor in Syria, Mu'awiya,[50] they claimed that "sovereignty belongs only to God" (*in 'il- ḥukmu illa li' Llāh*).[51] The response of the Caliph Ali was that "This is a word of justice which seeks injustice". However, even if we ascribe the emergence of the term *ḥākimiyya* to the Khawarij, it was not meant to refuse human authority in mundane affairs. It was rather a refusal of the outcome of the arbitration by Amr Ibn Al-Aās and Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari.[52]

Moreover, the word '*ḥukm*', usually translated as 'rule', including its derivatives, has divergent meanings in the Qur'an; like permissibility and impermissibility in issues related to worship and religion (Al-Nisā', 4:60-65; Al-Mā'ida 5:1; Yusuf, 12:40; Al-Kahf, 18:26, Al-Shūra, 42:10); fate and acts of God (Yusuf, 12:67; Al-Ra'ad, 13:41); prophethood and the Prophets' Sunnah (Al-Anbiyā', 21:74; Al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:14; Al-Aḥzāb, 33:34); the Qur'an and its interpretation (Al-Baqara 2:269; Al-Naḥl, 16:125); deep understanding and knowledge (Al-Shu'arā', 26:83; Mariam 19:12; Al-An'aām, 6:89); judicature, adjudication in disputes and conflicts among people (Al-Zumar, 39:3; Al-Ḥaj, 22:56; Al-Baqara 2:113); appointment of a prophet in rule (*Ṣād*, 38: 26), perfection and protection against perversion (Hud, 8:1; Al-Ḥaj, 22:52); clarity and intelligibility (Āl 'Imrān, 3:7); and finally *ḥukm* in the political meaning of governance (Al-Nisā' 4:58). Within the framework of these meanings the notion of *ḥākimiyya* in the Qur'an can be classified into two main categories. The first is the 'formative' (*takwīniyya*), which represents God's will and acts in His creation, as all that exists in this universe is subject to His sovereignty. The second is the 'legislative' (*tashri'īyya*), related to belief, religious acts of devotion, ethics and principles of mundane affairs. Thus, the aim of *ḥākimiyya* becomes double: to adjudicate between people in their mundane and eternal life, and to protect against perversion and guarantee the interest of humans in this life and the Hereafter.[53]

Finally, that the notion of *ḥākimiyya* inspired some Muslim schools, like Al-Maududi and Qutb, is true. However, this has always

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[50] Cf. Al-Awwa, *fi al-Niẓām*, 100f.

[51] Cf. the whole context, for example, in Al-An'aām, 6:57: "Say: 'For me, I (work) on a clear sign from my Lord, but ye reject Him. What ye would see hastened, is not in my power. The judgment rests with none but Allah: He declares the truth, and He is the best of judges'".

[52] Hisham Jaafar, *al-Ab'aād al-Siyāsiyya li Mafhūm al-Ḥākimiyya* Herndon-Virginia 1995, 79.

[53] Op. cit., 57 ff. Cf. Abu Al-A'la Al-Maududi, *Naẓariyyat Al-Islam al-Siyāsiyya*, Damascus 1967, 27f.

remained a mere political thought and a human reasoning *ijtihad*. In other words, it does not represent a clear scriptural Islamic political rule of Sharia, but rather a certain 'political thought' and jurisprudence (*fiqh siyāsi*).[54] Additionally, even the extremist Muslim political theorists acted in deep awareness of the difference from the authority of religious dignitaries in the medieval European experience.[55] Islamic scriptural sources, the Qur'an and the Sunnah, do not prescribe a certain and concrete model of rule, economy, or judicature that can thus be called "the Islamic" rule, economy, or judicature. Islam rather presents a general philosophy for these human developing notions, leaving the specific technicalities and mechanisms of application to the different spatio-temporal contexts. God's sovereignty does not mean that a certain Muslim authority rules in God's name. In Islam, as in a democracy, the *ummah* is the source of political authority, but the borders of this authority are the established conclusive and explicit religious texts that meet the unbroken consensus *ijmā'*.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that religion remains a point of reference in the Islamic concept of state. This simply means that when speaking about human rights, God's rights should be seriously taken into consideration. Another important point here is that Islam did not know a particular form of government. All forms of government in the long Islamic history are the fruit of human reasoning (*ijtihād*), under the guidance of the general and total rules encountered in the texts of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. In Islam, we cannot speak about an "Islamic government" but rather about an "Islamic philosophy of governance". In other words, a statecraft which can realize and incorporate the objectives of Islamic legislation can be called, at least politically, "Islamic".

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[54] Muhammad Imara. *Maqalāt al-Ghuluw al-Dīni wa al-Ladīni* (Essays of Religious and non-Religious Extremism). Cairo 2004. 31f.

[55] Cf. Al-Maududi. *Naẓariyyat*. 30-33. He calls his concept of Islamic political system of state "theocratic", but differentiates it from what he calls a 'medieval European theocracy'.

discussions. They had been active in various peacemaking forums in Sulawesi, an area that after the fall of Suharto in 1998 had been plagued by intermittent outbreaks of sectarian violence. Violent incidents occurred in particuiar around the city of Poso in Central Sulawesi.

One of the main issues during the post-violence discussions had been how to map the influence these conflicts had on women's lives and what priorities should be set to address the plight of women in post-conflict settings. Although the violence had been among Muslims and Christians, the roots of the conflicts were mostly economic, social and political. Each of these factors directly affected women's lives since many women suffered poverty due to lack of access to wealth and opportunities to work or to launch a business. Women furthermore suffered from cultural barriers created by patriarchal attitudes, for example, stereotypes that considered them to be weaker than men. It was clear that women suffer specific effects in the aftermath of conflict as they find themselves in vulnerable positions when, for example, the husband is murdered, and they become the sole caregivers for the children or are victims of rape.[2]

Although these observations derive from the context of conflict, a recurring topic during our discussions was that they mirror the obstacles experienced by Indonesian women in general and by those who are active in interreligious activities. Although in comparison with other parts of the Muslim world, Indonesian women have various options for social mobility and do serve as leaders of interreligious activities of peacemaking and reconciliation, they still need to navigate blatant forms of discrimination and poverty due to persistent forms of prejudice and the lack of social and economic opportunities.

The only part where the Indonesian and Dutch situations overlap in this context is where it concerns women's invisibility in interreligious activities. One of the main differences we could detect was the reality that few in Indonesia will deny that such activities are vital while in certain circles a "dialogue weariness" has taken hold of Dutch society. Although on the one hand several groups such as the *Kerngroep Vrouwentrialoog* insist on questions about how to develop good relationships while remaining different, on the other hand, a

[2] Cf., for example, the proceedings of the workshop organized by the N-Peace Network, "National Civil Society Consultation. Workshop on Perspectives of Women in the Policy on Women, Peace and Security." Manado, North Sulawesi June 8-9, 2011. Available at: http://n-peace.net/publications.

certain inertia has taken hold of some parts of Dutch society. This level of disinterest is based on several ideas, among others that due to material and physical well being, all problems concerning the interaction between people of different faiths, backgrounds and convictions have been solved. In many circles, the focus of Dutch interreligious interactions seems to have moved to discussions on hybridity and the invention of new, interreligious rituals and practices. On a certain level these topics allow for another layer of contentment as they instill the impression that differences between peoples of different faiths have been solved. In that way, Dutch society mirrors pre-1998 Indonesia when state-orchestrated and mandated forms of dialogue, especially held by men in high positions, conveyed the impression of a harmonious religiously plural society. Poso, the Moluccans and other areas in Indonesia revealed the consequences when interfaith engagement is superficial and merely serves as a Band-Aid on wounds of discontent and disagreement.

The essays in this section serve as a reminder of our vulnerability when trying to understand each other's religious point of view, and the necessity of including all parties ranging from the children, to women and others whose voices are seldom heard.

Potential for Women Leaders of Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren) in Promoting Gender-Inclusive Education

Ema Marhumah

This chapter discusses the role of women leaders in the *pesantren* and looks at the various forms of hegemonic power exercised within these institutions that obstruct models of gender-inclusive education in *pesantren*.

Generations of Indonesian Muslim leaders have been trained in the so-called *Pesantren*: Islamic boarding schools. The head of such a school is a scholar of Islam called a *kiai* and is fully in charge of the institution, holding the final authority in all matters. Oftentimes the wife of a kiai, the *nyai*, is in charge of the women's education of a *pesantren*. Her position, however, is not equal to that of the kiai as she equally submits to his final authority. When considering the formation of the students and the distribution of knowledge and power within the *pesantren*, we observe that the high level of authority held by the kiai in fact reflects an imbalance in power. Firstly, male students follow more extensive and in-depth curricula, which means that in terms of religious authority they gain higher positions. Secondly, the gender discourse in *pesantren* becomes heavily male-dominated, creating the regular standards for normative conduct and behavior. Furthermore, it sets the tone for the relationships between male and female students in the *pesantren*.

Nyai and mostly *kiai* are key figures in *pesantren*. They not only act as school leaders and teachers, they play important roles in modeling Islamic values and concepts. They serve as role models and guide their students in public and personal matters alike. The relation be-

tween *kiai* and *nyai* with their students (*santri*) is governed by a religious spirit and the students are not only expected to obey and follow the *kiai* or *nyai*'s instructions, but also their advice, such as whom to marry. This type of relationship gives the *kiai* as well as the *nyai* a powerful position from which to convey their norms and values to the students.

Education in the *pesantren* furthermore has a sacred value, transmitting certain models of Islamic authority, and the values, rituals, and symbols that are accepted in its related communities. Their educational materials are laden with references to truth, correct modes of morality, and authority structures.

In their capacity as second most important person in those schools, nyais can play foundational roles in introducing models of gender-inclusive education into the curricula of *pesantren*. When given positions equal to those of the kiai, they would gain the opportunity and authority to promote gender awareness and create non-discriminatory gender relations within the *pesantren*. Such proactive initiatives would not only change the mindset of scores of future leaders of Islam, but also contribute to vibrant gender discourses in contemporary Islamic thought. Furthermore it would equip the male students in *pesantren* with gender-sensitive knowledge that they can apply to the traditional Islamic disciplines of learning.

Considering the power imbalance between male and female leaders and students in the *pesantren*, we observe that kiais as well as nyais are in positions to change and support an inclusive gender discourse. Not only can they raise the students' awareness on gender issues and promote gender equality in their religious teachings, they can also model this type of equality within their own relation and in the way they govern the *pesantren*.

1. Obstacles for women leaders in the *pesantren* to achieve inclusive education

Since early 2000, the Indonesian government has introduced the so-called "Gender Mainstreaming" policy aimed at increasing women's participation in all parts of society. It is supported by almost all governmental institutions, and nowadays women's involvement in all aspects of life has become a center-stage issue. Among other goals the government aims at fulfilling a quota to fill 30% of the seats in Parliament with women and encourages public and private institutions to

follow suit. Gender mainstreaming has even influenced the educational systems of the *pesantren.*

Arguably, gender-inclusive education is a new idea for the *pesantren* and some have shown fierce resistance to it. Some even created a controversy, claiming that such forms of education are Western models and not rooted in the Islamic tradition. However, the issue of inclusive education, which has given male and female students equal opportunities to obtain an education and become members of a *pesantren* community, is supported by gender sensitivity awareness, which is critical of the cultural bias that has long existed within the *pesantren.*

Since the early 1970s, historians, sociologists, political scientists, linguists, as well as anthropologists have researched the phenomenon of *pesantren.* However, gender issues as an aspect of social life in the *pesantren* have hardly received any attention until recently. During the 1980s, Zamakhsyari Dhofier conducted the first comprehensive research on *pesantren.* As the title shows, *Study on World View of Kiai*, Dhofier focused on the position and role of *kiai*s in developing the social-religious life of the *pesantren.* In *pesantren*, the kiai had become the single authoritative person who was supported by a network of kinship and the intellectual and symbolic power across *pesantrens* and across generations. Meanwhile the *nyai* did not have a significant place in the discussion of *pesantren* as a whole.

The limited attention given to women and the focus on the dominant male figures of the *kiai* and the *ustaz* (teacher) in the *pesantren* discourse point to a blind spot concerning gender sensitivity in the early studies on this educational institution. Before 2000, the three main underlying research assumptions seem to have been that a *pesantren* is a social institution created, run, and developed by men with the kiai and his multiple *ustaz* as the key figures. Furthermore, the position and role of women in the *pesantren* was regarded as less important, subordinate or at times as irrelevant. Finally, it was assumed that the *pesantren* education did not have any substantial social, cultural, or political impact on the lives of their female students. Even if such an impact was apparent, it was not deemed important in the wider socio-religious context.

This imbalance in available material was corrected when in 2003 a study appeared focusing on the role of the *nyai* in the *pesantren.* The research details the experiences of a *nyai* who supports her husband in

indirect manifestations of power. Knowledge is constructed by certain regimes of power, and works in tandem with the ruling elite. According to Foucault:

> Power operates knowledge continuously and vice versa, knowledge assumes a form of implication and power. ...Knowledge and power are integrated and there is no moment in one period of time where knowledge will lose its dependency to power.[14]

Since power enables knowledge to form a social reality, the power relation among social actors always creates an arena of knowledge.[15]

Referring to this framework developed by Foucault, education as a socialization process, including inclusive education in *pesantren*, is a process of production and reproduction of gender discourses that reflect certain power relations. The domination of certain gender discourse in the *pesantren* is the manifestation of a power relation where one group of agents dominates the other group of agents. Conversely, the power structure in the *pesantren* serves as the explanation of a certain dominant gender discourse. This discourse in turn regulates and normalizes all actions, behaviors and gender relations among the *pesantren* community members.

3. The role of women leaders in gender-inclusive education in *pesantren*

Kiai and *nyai* have the power to change or support the gender discourses that are currently being created in the *pesantren*. They can raise the students' awareness about gender issues and support gender equality in religious teachings, for example, by monitoring the types of religious textbooks that are being used. *Kiai* and *nyai* can also strengthen their commitment to teaching the values of gender equality by their personal behavior and by the way they carry out their daily duties.

They can influence all decisions that regulate the lives of the students, in the school, as well as in the dorms. They can even intervene in decisions taken by some of the *pesantren*'s governing bodies. Decisions taken by the managing bodies will acquire the status of legal power if the *kiai* and *nyai* have given their approval. In summary: the *kiai* and *nyai*'s role in creating models of gender-inclusive education

[14] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge. Selected interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, C. Gordon (ed.). Bringhton 1980, 52.

[15] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. Harmondsworth 1977, 27.

is vital; they can strengthen negative as well as positive gender stereotypes.

Those teaching in the *pesantren* have various degrees of involvement ranging from major, to moderate, to minimalist. The major role is played by the *kiai* who holds the highest authority in the *pesantren*. As the school's owner, he makes the most strategic decisions and teaches the main religious classes to both male and female students. None of the *nyai* holds this high position, not even if they function as associate to the *kiai* (*badal*). The moderate role is held by *kiai* and *nyai* who are in leadership and decision-making positions in the *pesantren*, but are neither involved in the daily learning process, nor do they interact directly with students. Most of them are young, junior *kiai* and *nyai*. Meanwhile, those holding a minimalist role do not take part in any decision-making processes.

As I mentioned earlier the dominant gender discourse in a *pesantren* reflects an ideological truth system that is adopted and applied by the school's community, specifically the students. It is enforced in various ways, often involving a mechanism to discipline students' behaviors and attitudes. According to my observation, methods of regulating the behavior of students include: written sets of rules to maintain order within the school; speeches and sermons that convey certain values, norms and accepted modes of behavior; religious threats and sanctions when students violate the prescribed ethical, cultural and moral codes. Furthermore, there are numerous unwritten rules concerning modes of behavior and habits that are considered acceptable or unacceptable within *pesantren*. The disciplinary process also takes place within the personal relation between *kiai* or teacher and students and by monitoring the students' learning progress. Interfering in the academic achievement and learning progress in a *pesantren* is also a way of disciplining students, because in this process, students are asked to accept, understand and comprehend certain gender models and ideologies. Finally, the schedule of sermons and rituals inside the *pesantren* by itself can serve as a mechanism to discipline students, providing certain routines that lead to specific goals.

At the same time, students have to obey the ever-present demands in respecting authority, values, rituals, symbols and certain truths that are upheld in the pesantren.

Conclusion

Gender inclusive education in the *pesantren* should emphasize the position and role of the nyai. If given opportunities and the necessary platforms, *nyais* can play important roles in promoting ideas of gender equality. Especially when her position is equal to that of the *kiai*, non-discriminatory gender relations can emerge in the closed off world of the *pesantren.* This essay attempts to address several issues concerning gender inclusive education in the *pesantren.* It is clear that the mindset in the *pesantren* concerning structures of power and authority that influence the gender discourse needs to change. In order for this effort to succeed, all those present in a *pesantren* should be addressed, including the *kiai*, *nyai* and teachers, as well as the associates or *badal.* When dealing with the problems of women today, we need new understandings about gender relations based on Islamic values. By using historical analysis, as well as by referring to the traditional disciplines, the entire *pesantren* community can become more sensitive towards women's issues and understand contemporary gender issues. In order to create a more dynamic and open-minded atmosphere, all students in the *pesantren* should be involved. Furthermore, alternative studies on gender and Islam need to be added to the curriculum. There is a need for a model of understanding gender in Islam that can accommodate traditional gender concepts that are compatible with and draw from Islamic teaching. Mining the Islamic tradition will help the male leaders, especially the *kiai*, to become familiar with new ideas about gender and prevent them from feeling threatened by the new mindsets. Among others, the Sunnite tradition of the *Ahlus Sunnah wa al- Jama'ah* needs to be reinterpreted in order to infuse it with principles of gender. This is an exercise that is already starting at the Islamic universities all over Indonesia. After all, the issue of "gender streamlining" has taken center stage throughout the country and its strategic plans as set forth by the Ministry for Women's Empowerment can encourage traditional institutions such as the *pesantren* to accept learning about contemporary issues that affect and influence the life of women.

When the authoritative bodies and teachers in the *pesantren* have become more sensitive towards gender issues, we need to introduce gender-inclusive teaching models, followed by gender-sensitive management models. Lastly, there is a need to develop learning models that are dialogical and discursive which will create a more open culture of dialogue among students, kiai, nyai and teachers. These ap-

proaches will help students to learn how to express and articulate their points of view. Needless to say, the government can assist in each of these steps as it concerns the education of an important part of Indonesia's population and the future of Islamic leaders.

This essay investigates the private and public rationale people use to support the practice of FGM that Muslim families in Kupang do voluntarily. FGM deprives a woman of agency over her own body and infringes on her reproductive rights. In Indonesia the practice is widespread and has become more prevalent after radically minded Muslim groups started to advocate it as a purely Islamic practice.

1. Background

The city of Kupang is the capital city of West Timor, or East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. This city also is, in administrative terms, a *kota madya* (city area) which has the same status as a regency (*kabupaten*) within the Indonesian administrative system. Kupang is a multi-ethnic city of the tribe of Timor, Rote, Sabu, Flores, a small number of ethnic Chinese and migrants from Java, Bugis, Buton, Makasar and several other tribes. But regardless of the ethnic diversity that exists, Kupang residents refer to themselves as "Beta orang Kupang" (I am Kupangese).

Based on data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS Kupang) in 2011, around 13.5 percent of Kupang residents (349,344 total) were Muslim, 84 percent Christian (Protestant and Catholic) and the rest Hindu or Buddhist. Though they are the second largest religious group in the city, in the rest of East Nusa Tenggara, they are just 8 percent of the entire population of 4,679,316, which is 89 percent Christian.[3]

The populations at the mosques where I did my research are mostly made up of immigrants and represent various parts of Indonesia's population. In the Nurul Mubein congregation, there are about 300 people who hail from Java, Bugis, Buton, Rote and Solor. Most members are fishermen.[4] The Baiturrahmaan mosque was built in a new settlement called "Perumnas". It started with one hundred households but has seen a sharp increase in members as new residents moved in. The majority of people in this area work as civil servants.[5]

The al-Muttaqin mosque is situated in the Kelapa Lima Village, Kupang City. When the mosque was established in 1997, there were only 150 families. Now, it has over 700 members who work as civil servants, entrepreneurs, retirees, professionals, employees, small trad-

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[3] http://nttprov.go.id/provntt/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=108&Itemid=111 and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Nusa_Tenggara.

[4] Observation Report by Kelompok Mahasiswa Semester V Fakultas Teologi UKAW, 2011.

[5] Ibid.

ers, and unskilled labourers. These members also come from different ethnic communities across Indonesia: Buginese, Javanese, Alorese, Sumbanese, Solorese, Makasarese, Sumaterans, Rotenese, Sabunese, and Timorese.[6]

2. Non-religious and Religious Views on FGM

The World Health Organization (WHO)

The World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, and the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 all considered FGM to be a violation of a woman's reproductive and health rights. The definition of FGM refers to all procedures from partial to total removal of the external female genitalia or other injuries to the female genital organs whether for cultural or any other non-therapeutic reasons (WHO, 1996).[7] Female circumcision is inevitably a form of FGM, and thus the term FGM is more accurate and precise.

There are four types of FGM that can be defined as violating a woman's reproductive and health rights. The main three are: 1. removal of the clitoris only (clitoridectomy); 2. removal of the clitoris and inner labia (labia minora); and 3. (infibulation), removal of all or part of the inner labia (labia minora) and outer labia (labia majora), and usually the clitoris as well. Typically the wound is fused, leaving a small hole for the passage of urine and menstrual blood. It has to be opened for intercourse and childbirth. About 85 percent of women undergo type 1 or 2 of the forms of Female Genital Mutilation; the rest undergo the third form. Other actions are categorized as type 4; these involve the symbolic pricking or piercing of the clitoris or labia, removing the skin of the clitoris (prepotium), cutting into the vagina to widen the vaginal area, and introducing corrosive substances to tighten the vagina.

In their 2003 report, the Indonesian Population Council, divided FGM as practised in Indonesia in two main groups: "symbolic only" where there is no incision or excision (28% of all the cases they studied) and "harmful" forms, involving incision (49%) and excision (22%).

In their research of 1999, Andree Feillard and Lies Marcoes, still observed that most forms of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in In-

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Population Council: Female Circumcision in Indonesia, 5.

community to practice FGM with the rationale that it "cleans" the girls. He was aware that the practice is mentioned in the Qur'an and Hadith but was not sure where to find the precise passages and the advice they contained. In his mosque, girls were circumcised between the ages of 40 days and 7 months. FGM is done not by season or during specific celebrations in the congregation, but at the family's request. During the past three years, more than one hundred girls had been circumcised in his mosque.

Both Abdul Kadir Maliasen and his wife, Nurhayati Maliasen-Arkiang (49 years), viewed FGM as a legacy of the prophets. Therefore, as Muslims, they felt compelled to continue the tradition. They also argued that FGM should be done for reasons of hygiene and health. Mr. Adam Asrakal (47 years), a teacher in one of the high schools in the city of Kupang, said that there were two purposes of female circumcision. Firstly, it enhances a woman's sexual pleasure and secondly, it mutes the female desires. One of the women performing the procedure at the Baiturrahman Perumnas mosque, Mrs. Nirwana Hajjah Kandolo Bajo (62 years old), also considered cleanliness during the ritual prayer as the most important reason to perform FGM. According to her, if a woman has not been circumcised, urine will store inside the clitoris, which can make her sick or even cancel the validity of the ritual prayers.

According to Hajji Amir Kiwang (66 years old), the imam of the Baitturrahman mosque, FGM is very important. When viewed in terms of health. FGM for women would be useful, healthy and clean, for in his opinion, it prevents illnesses of the female genitals. He also adhered to the religious rationale that FGM should be performed so that the girls are pure and clean during the ritual prayers (*shalat*). Another reason he provided for performing FGM was that it would reduce excessive sexual passions in women.[15]

Mr. Suyanto (63 years old), a retired civil servant who served as chairman of the board of the Al-Mutaqin mosque, confirmed that FGM was based on a command of the Prophet. He argued that FGM was necessary for women so that they could satisfy their husbands and give them pleasure. He also argued that the practice reduced women's

[15] Researchers: Fredrik Y. A. Doeka, Devison Armando Ittu, Febby Wellyannie Nguru, Enggelina Moduhina, Tri Nepa Fay 11/02/12.

sexual passions and could lead to perfecting one self by constraining physical desires.[16]

The procedure is carried out by a female modin or religious specialist who uses basic instruments, such a small pair of scissors. For example, Mrs. Sueba Maliasen (age 80), who is the modin in the Masjid Nurul Mudin Mubein, used to use a small rusty pair of scissors to cut off the end of the clitoris. According to her, FGM was an important religious requirement.

Another modin, Mrs. Nirwana Hajjah Kandola Bajo (age 62) was a retired teacher and had performed the procedure since she was young. According to her, the procedure of FGM is very simple: the end of the clitoris is clipped with the fingers and then cut off. Then she presses her thumb on the wound on the genital organ to prevent bleeding.

The researchers witnessed the procedure on May 6, 2011, when Mrs. Nirvana circumcised her seven-month-old granddaughter. The event took place at 07.00 a.m. and took ten minutes total. Loud Arabic chants or anasheed[17] drowned out the baby's crying. Before and after the circumcision, Mrs. Nirvana recited a prayer in Arabic. She did not know what it meant but told us that the prayer was selected from a copy of the mosque's prayer book.

Finally, when we asked nineteen Muslim women who had undergone the procedure if they had experienced any effects on their sexual behavior, fifteen said they felt no impact on their sexual behavior. We had similar answers from women who had converted to Islam at a later age; eight out of nine interviewees felt there had been no change in their post-circumcision sexual life.[18] One of them, Siti Fatimah (70 years old) who converted to Islam as a teenager, was circumcised at the age of seventeen years. She told us that in order to purify herself before the FGM procedure she had taken seven clay baths and seven

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[16] Researchers: Fredrik Y. A. Doeka, Cindy E. Obehetan, Adriyani Amnifu, Kesalon Loni Peni, Endryasmi Marawali 14/02/12.

[17] Anasheed (Arabic: singular nashīd, plural Anāshīd), meaning: "chants" Anasheeds are popular throughout the Islamic world. The material and lyrics of anasheed usually make reference to Islamic beliefs, history, and religion, as well as current events. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anasheed.

[18] We distributed 30 questionnaires to 30 respondents in the Nurul Mubein congregation. They were chosen by the researchers because they have sufficient knowledge about FGM and also practise FGM. Of the 30 questionnaires, only 28 questionnaires were returned. Respondents who returned the questionnaire consisted of 19 women who had been Muslim since birth and 9 converts (mualaf). Their ages range from 17 to 70 years.

baths with water. Guided by a modin or religious specialist she had furthermore pronounced the *Shahada* or Muslim creed.

4. FGM: an Islamic Doctrine?

Our investigations clearly show that in the three congregations we visited in Kupang, the views on FGM are, first and foremost, based on reasons of religion and the desire to follow Islamic rules. Furthermore, sexual pleasure and purification are mentioned as justification for the procedure. The Muslim believers interviewed consider FGM to be part of their religious tradition and obligations. A recurring argument is that it purifies the woman. Being impure could render one's ritual prayer invalid which would be an unacceptable infringement of the religious precepts. The religious texts are not clear on whether FGM is allowed, but the fact that the Hadith mentions it suffices. Although it is not a requirement, it has become a religio-cultural tradition practiced in various degrees by Muslims in Kupang, as well as in the rest of Indonesia.[19] Although there is no verse in the Qur'an that supports FGM, most people associate the practice with the Hadith according to which the Prophet instructed the one performing it not to cut off too much in order to prevent the loss of libido in women.[20] As a result, the majority of Muslims in Indonesia, as well as in the three congregations in Kupang city, understand circumcision to be compulsory for men as well as for women.

By imposing certain degrees of modesty on women to prevent sexual licentiousness, women are made the principal actors responsible for preserving the sanctity of the family and reproduction. Within Indonesia's patriarchal society, satisfying the husband sexually has become part of the regulations concerning gender roles, dress codes, veiling and seclusion. This, of course, indicates gender inequality. Meanwhile Qur'an Sura 2:187 clearly states there should be sexual equality between husband and wife:

> Permitted to you, on the night of the fasts, is the approach to your wives. They are your garments and ye are their garments. Allah knoweth what ye used to do secretly among yourselves; but He turned to you and forgave you;

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[19] Sumarni D.W., Siti Aisyah and Julia Madarina. *Sunat Perempuan di Bawah Bayang-Bayang Tradisi*, Yogyakarta 2005, 58-64. For an English summary of this book, see: http://www.rahima .or.id/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=802:women-and-the-tradition-of-circumcision-ideology-behinds-female-genital-mutilation-fgm--focus-27th-edition-&catid=61 :focus-&Itemid=382.

[20] See: Marhumah, Mencari akar, 2012.

> so now associate with them, and seek what Allah Hath ordained for you, and eat and drink, until the white thread of dawn appear to you distinct from its black thread; then complete your fast till the night appears; but do not associate with your wives while ye are in retreat in the mosques. Those are Limits (set by) Allah. Approach not nigh thereto. Thus doth Allah make clear His Signs to men: that they may learn self-restraint.

As Riaz Hassan argues, over the centuries, the way male scholars of Islam have interpreted the sacred texts has led to the development of an institutional framework for the management and satisfaction of human sexuality through the imposition of control over women. FGM, in this case, has become part of the framework for the management and satisfaction of the husband's sexuality.[21]

The third view on FGM is that it can make women pure. With respect to this, Islam views the body as the locus of human existence and activity. Islamic law stipulates the regular purification of the body to perform the religious rituals. The body is viewed as the site of social continuity as well as punishment in the case of violating social norms. Purification and renunciation of the body are required for both men and women in Islamic law. Ritual purification involves washing and wiping certain parts of the body, and is invalidated by natural bodily emissions (urine, feces, pus, blood and vomit), sleep, unconsciousness, insanity and sexual contact. Most jurists agree that touching one's genitals (penis, vagina, and anus) also invalidates purification.[22]

Gender Injustice

From a gender perspective, the decision to have the procedure of FGM is generally not in the hands of the women themselves. The parents, encouraged and/or supported by the modin, imams, people who work in the mosque, and even by the government of Kupang city, decide for the girl. At times this decision is made under considerable social pressure. This observation agrees with Nursyahbani's assessment that Indonesian women have no decision-making authority over their reproductive rights, including actions that may interfere with or even destroy their sex organs.[23] In the three Muslim congregations we de-

[21] Riaz Hassan, Religion, Society and the State in Indonesia and Pakistan, in: *Islamic Studies* 38, 1999, 45-62.

[22] Brannon Wheeler "Body, Significance Of", in Richard C. Martin (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, 2004, 111.

[23] Sumarni DW, Siti Aisyah and Julia Madarina, *Sunat*, 82.

2. Findings

The method of narrative inquiry empowers a storyteller: rather than an object and a victim, one becomes an actor. When the other person hears the story, it is affirmed and validated. In order for stories to emerge, participants need a safe space to openly share stories, including sad ones, about family, church, and society. When we apply theories from gender studies and feminist theology to these stories, we will also be able to pose questions concerning issues of inequality and injustice. At the same time, we can point out the moments we need to express respect for others, restore self-dignity within the community, and when we should show solidarity.

By approaching the issue via multiple learning techniques, we also learn to position a problem within its context and understand the complexity of realities. Since the issues we deal with are closely related to issues of culture, religion and gender, this approach allows us to avoid going into dogmatic discussions.

Furthermore, gender studies can help to create awareness of the holistic person and her needs. In fact, courses in pastoral care and peace education have the same goal. This, in turn, will benefit future leaders of religion when, for example, engaging in pastoral counseling, which is an important part of their work. A religious leader will no longer be satisfied with merely analyzing a situation, but will also engage in it with examples from her personal experience. For example, when discussing issues of justice in the classroom, students can theoretically understand the importance of justice values. They approve of them and would like to apply them in their own lives. However, within their personal families, communities, and within the nation of Indonesia they encounter myriad problems related to forms of injustice. Academic study and community engagement will help them to translate this sense of justice into society where it can serve as a tool for peace building.

3. The Classroom: a Place to Build Peace

As I have argued, the classroom can become a space of healing for students and teachers, as well as community members. To reach this goal, we need to reinvestigate our views on what constitutes knowledge and how we transfer it. Such an exercise would require changing our educational philosophy, educational process, and, eventually, the entire curriculum. The steps I have discerned are that we

first shift the intellectual focus to the needs of the people instead of those of the school or the students only. Secondly, we need to find a balance between transferring knowledge and ways of learning together as a community. Finally, it requires building a high degree of trust as part of the bonding process among participants.

Designing the classroom as a space to rebuild our human community transfers the process of education from the teacher and formally educated people. It takes away their authority based on knowledge. By moving to an approach of sharing knowledge, our current models that rely on intellectual isolationism are being balanced by models based on pragmatic approaches.[4] This alternative method especially challenges the curricular models that remain dominant and are based on imperial and disciplinary views of education. Embodying the struggles and hopes of the community means that apart from the explicit curriculum we also need to be mindful of the implicit curriculum and the null curriculum. This multi-level strategy will guarantee that issues of justice are incorporated in the curriculum so that all participants will be empowered to commit to the practice of justice and peace.

Finally, we need to address participants about their personal experiences and social condition. In the Maluku islands, many young people suffered from the violent conflicts. Being children at the time, it was too early to discuss the various reasons behind this violence. Allowing them now as young adults studying in our universities to relate and reflect on their personal experiences will give them a voice and open ways for them to heal. Equipped with this new knowledge, they can enter society and assist others in finding healing and a sense of peace and justice.

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[4] Cf. Cameron McCarthy and Greg Dimitriadis, Postcolonial Literature and the curricular imaginations. Wilson Harris and the pedagogical implications of the carnivalesque, in: *Educational Philosophie and Theory* 36, 2004, 201-213, 212.

actual numbers of women who are part of the governing bodies. Of the 56 members of the Indonesian Council of *Ulema* eight are women;[7] in the core management of the Nahdlatul Ulama organization, there is not one woman among its 29 members. One woman sits on the Central Board of the Muhammadiyah organization that has thirteen members. In both organizations there is the assumption that women need not have a strong presence in the leadership structures as their voices are already being represented by the women's branches of these organizations.[8] The situation is similar among the Christian leading bodies: the Indonesian Conference of Catholic Bishops, at all its levels, is entirely led by Bishops; meaning that there is no single woman. The Indonesian Council of Churches had three women among the thirteen members of its executive council.

The low numbers of women in these governing boards affect discussions, conversations, formulations of policies, and the decision-making processes since the opinions of women could differ from those of the men. If they happen to be on such boards, it does not automatically mean that they were elected or invited based on the desire to create a gender balance. The organization might merely want to fill a quota in order to comply with governmental emancipation policies. In some cases, however, women were invited based on their professional skills, such as expertise in finance. For example, WALUBI (the Indonesian Buddhist Council) was headed by Hartati Murdaya who was one of the most successful women business leaders in Indonesia.[9] However, there is no guarantee that the women who are present in the governance bodies of religious institutions are advocating women's rights. In fact, they might lack the gender awareness to challenge certain misogynic patterns and at times they might even approve of and support them.

Of course, we should not forget that men can be ardent advocates just as well for women's rights. However, until now we seldom see

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[7] Cf. the 2009 list published on the Internet: http://www.mui.or.id/index.php?Option=com conten&view=article&id=52&Itemid=54.

[8] According to Mariaulfah Anshor, in the Main Conference of NU in 2003/2004, there was an agreement that women should be included in the structure of NU at all levels, starting from the core management to the branch management. However, this notion was denied in *Muktamar* 2005 to *Muktamar* 2010. Their justification was that there is already *Fatayat* NU, an institution under NU especially for young women. The same case applies in Muhammadiyah, as there is *Aisyiah* (for women only). (Anshor and Ibu Nurhayati, personal communication, August 16, 2010).

[9] Unfortunately, at the time of this writing she is in jail for corruption.

such individuals influence the various decisions made by religious institutions and infuse them with a strong perspective on gender. If this was the case, we would find much more support for recovering women's respect and dignity and a desire to achieve justice for all citizens of Indonesia.[10]

2. Personal Experiences

My observations of the mindsets of what I call the religious elite and their perception towards women are based on my own experiences and those of other women. In 1999, Margareth, one of my colleagues at Interfidei, attended a closed meeting of Protestant churches that was mostly attended by Protestant pastors, several of whom were lecturers of theology. Others were leaders of local churches, or members of the Indonesian Council of Churches. Some of them were active in inter-faith movements or in non-governmental projects. Margareth, a Catholic, was the youngest participant and the only non-Protestant in the group.

When she returned to Yogya, we discussed her impressions of the meeting since it had struck her that those present all had shown certain patterns of behavior. They had valued power and titles and degrees. People with doctoral degrees had been highly praised, as if they were of great importance, whereas those without a graduate degree had been considered of lesser value. Furthermore, when talking about women they had used inappropriate language: telling pornographic stories or jokes that degraded women, including their own wives or the wives of their friends. Finally, men had dominated all the discussions.

Although we cannot generalize, the above observations are not untypical for such meetings of religious leaders in Indonesia. However, we have to discern between the various groups that are emerging as nowadays more male leaders have gained deeper understanding of gender issues and related problems. They are not that many yet, whether Protestant, Catholic, Muslim, Buddhist, or Hindu. They treat women with respect, however when they hold high positions in their

[10] Various aspects, whether economic, political, or cultural, are analyzed in terms of comprehending the issue and looking for the solution for liberation of women, with religion being no exception. This is understandable as religion is a social institution, especially for the Asian community, and in general actually determines the whole development of the community. Farid Wajidi, Perempuan dan Agama: Sumbangan Riffaat Hassan in Fauzie Ridjal et al., *Dinamika Gerakan Perempuan* 11-22.

learn the right way to live with and for others is also related with monism (.21). But among the Christians that agree with the humanistic idea that Jesus was no more than a great figure in human history, monism is unlikely to be observed.

Table 4 shows that commonality pluralism is significantly related with few background characteristics among Muslims. Women are more likely to agree with commonality pluralism than men (.14), but other correlations are not relevant. Still, commonality pluralism displays some correlations with images of Muhammad. Commonality pluralism is more likely to be found among respondents that do not fully reject the humanistic image of Muhammad (.17). There is also positive correlation between Muhammad as prophet, Muhammad as unique in closeness to God and Muhammad as perfection on the one hand, and commonality pluralism on the other hand, but less significantly so and hardly relevant.

For Christian students, we also find few significant (and hardly relevant) correlations between commonality pluralism and the background characteristics. We can therefore conclude that the social location of the 'moderate' model of commonality pluralism is less outspoken than the social location of the models at the outer ends of the spectrum, namely monism and – as we will see below – relativistic pluralism.

A somewhat clearer pattern is indeed shown for the social location of relativistic pluralism (Table 5). For Muslim respondents, relativistic pluralism is more likely among women than men (.13) and more agreed upon in the more 'modern' city of Yogyakarta than in Ambon (.11). Opposite to monism, respondents that agree more (or disagree less) with the items of relativistic pluralism, are those who score low on religious characteristics. This means that relativistic pluralism is more likely to be found among those students with low participation rates in religious services and religious activities, and among those who show little involvement with religious organizations. Relativistic pluralism is positively associated with humanistic Muhammad, meaning that agreement with the statement that all religions are equally valid ways to ultimate truth is more likely among those who see Mohammad as nothing more than a great figure in human history (.29). But the more traditional religious conviction of Muhammad as model (*'uswa'*) is negatively associated with relativistic pluralism (-.19).

Table 5: Social location of *relativistic pluralism.*

	Relativistic pluralism	
	Muslims	Christians
Background characteristics		
Socio-economic characteristics		
Age	.04	-.09*
Gender	.13**	.03
Location	.11**	.19**
Religious characteristics		
Father's involvement in religious activities		.13**
Personal involvement in religious organizations	.11**	.09*
Participation in religious service	-.14**	
Participation in religious activities	-.09*	
Frequency of praying	-.05	-.11**
Number of friends of other religions	-.10**	
Perceived threat		
Economic (job opportunity)		-.11**
Religious convictions		
Images of Muhammad		
Perfection	-.09*	
Uswa (model)	-19**	
Humanistic	.29**	
Images of Jesus		
Humanistic		.22**

Correlations are significant at p≤.05 (*) or p.≤00 (**) level. There is no significant correlation between relativistic pluralism and the following variables: father's and mother's involvement in religious choice, mother's involvement in religious activities, and political, social and cultural perceived threat. With exception of the humanistic Jesus image, there are also no significant correlations between relativism and Jesus images among Christian respondents, neither with 'Prophet' and 'uniqueness in closeness to God' among Muslims.

Christian respondents in Yogyakarta are more likely to agree with relativistic pluralism than their fellow believers in Ambon (.19), something we have also found for Muslims. But not only the more modern context of Yogyakarta (in terms of rationalization in all societal domains) might play a role here. The whole context of latent and manifest conflicts between Muslims and Christians in Ambon – in contrast with the relatively peaceful and cooperative relations between Muslims and Christians in Yogyakarta – is important as well. After the major conflicts between Muslims and Christians that devastated the region from 1999 until 2002, Ambon city remains religiously segregated, and even now violence frequently flares from the most trivial of causes.[51] Further, we find a striking significant and relevant correla-

[51] Cf. International Crisis Group [ICG], *Cautious Calm in Ambon*, Jakarta/Brussels 2012.

tion between relativistic pluralism and the humanistic Jesus model (.22), indicating that relativistic pluralism goes together with a perspective on Jesus that stresses his humanity only.

To conclude: looking at the three models of interpreting religious plurality, monism has the most outspoken social location. Both among Muslims and Christians, monism can be found mainly among respondents who score relatively high on religious characteristics and among those with more traditional religious images of Muhammad and Jesus. In addition, among Muslims monism is more likely to be found among those who feel threatened in their social position. Commonality pluralism shows a somewhat blurred picture. The social location of relativistic pluralism is opposite to that of monism. Relativism can be found primarily among respondents who score relatively low on religious characteristics and traditional religious images, and among those who do not fully reject humanistic interpretations of Muhammad or Jesus. In general, religious characteristics and specific religious convictions are better indicators for attitudes towards religious plurality than socio-economic characteristics and perceived threat.

3. Discussion

In this section we highlight some salient features of our findings.

First of all, we found three cross-religious comparative models of interpreting religious plurality: monism, commonality pluralism, and relativistic pluralism. Although these models are derived from the so-called 'theology of religions' mainly based on Christian theological literature, this result allows meaningful comparisons between Muslims and Christians on their attitudes towards religious plurality. For both Muslim and Christian students in Indonesia 'replacement' and 'fulfillment' – although theoretically distinguishable – cluster in one single factor 'monism'. Theologians might make these fine-tuned distinctions, but ordinary Indonesian believers who hold inclusivist attitudes also hold exclusivist attitudes, and the other way around. They are simply intertwined, and this is true for both Muslims and Christians. This finding is completely in line with other empirical research in Europe and elsewhere in Asia.[52] In other words: as far as 'religious identity' deals with the way we interpret religious plurality, Muslims and Christians can be meaningfully compared.

[52] Anthony et al., Interpreting religious pluralism.

groups.[58] Other factors that affect the perception of threat are relative power and size of the in-group and history of intergroup relations. At first sight, it might be surprising that in our research only Muslims' attitudes towards religious plurality are influenced by perceived threat. In Indonesia, however, Muslims perceive more threat than the Christian minority. This is the case in our sample, but also confirmed in other studies.[59] This finding is especially surprising for Yogyakarta, where Muslims are a majority on both national and regional levels. Van Bruinessen[60] offers a possible explanation by referring to the rise of anti-Muslim sentiments in the Western world, which is used by the Indonesian government to create the perception that Islam is under threat and needs to be defended. Muslims might also experience more economic threat than Christians since the latter are – on average – economically better off and have significantly higher education levels than their Muslim fellow citizens.[61] The (in)famous aphorism that Indonesian Muslims are a majority with a minority complex possibly refers to the combination of these elements. If groups feel threatened and if their influence declines, exclusionary reactions are more likely to happen. Could we look from this perspective to rising negative prejudice towards Islam in the Western world as well?

Appendix: Measurement of attitudes toward religious plurality

- Replacement monism

1. Only through my religion people can attain true liberation.
4. Eventually my religion will replace other religions.
6. Other religions do not offer a true experience of God.
19. The truth about God, human beings and the universe is found only in my religion.

- Fulfillment monism

3. Compared with my religion, other religions contain only partial truths.
5. Compared with other religions, my religion offers the surest way to liberation.

[58] Cf. Blake Riek et al., Intergroup Threat and Outgroup Attitudes: A Meta-Analytic Review, in: *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 10, 2006, 336-353.

[59] Agnieska Kanas et al., Religious Identification and Interreligious Contacts: A Study of Muslims and Christians in Indonesia and the Philippines. Submitted article 2014.

[60] Martin van Bruinessen, Post-Soeharto Muslim Engagements with Civil Society and Democratization, in: *Indonesia in transition. Rethinking 'Civil Society', 'Region', and 'Crisis'*, Samuel Hanneman and Henk Schulte Nordholt (eds), Yogyakarta 2004, 37-66.

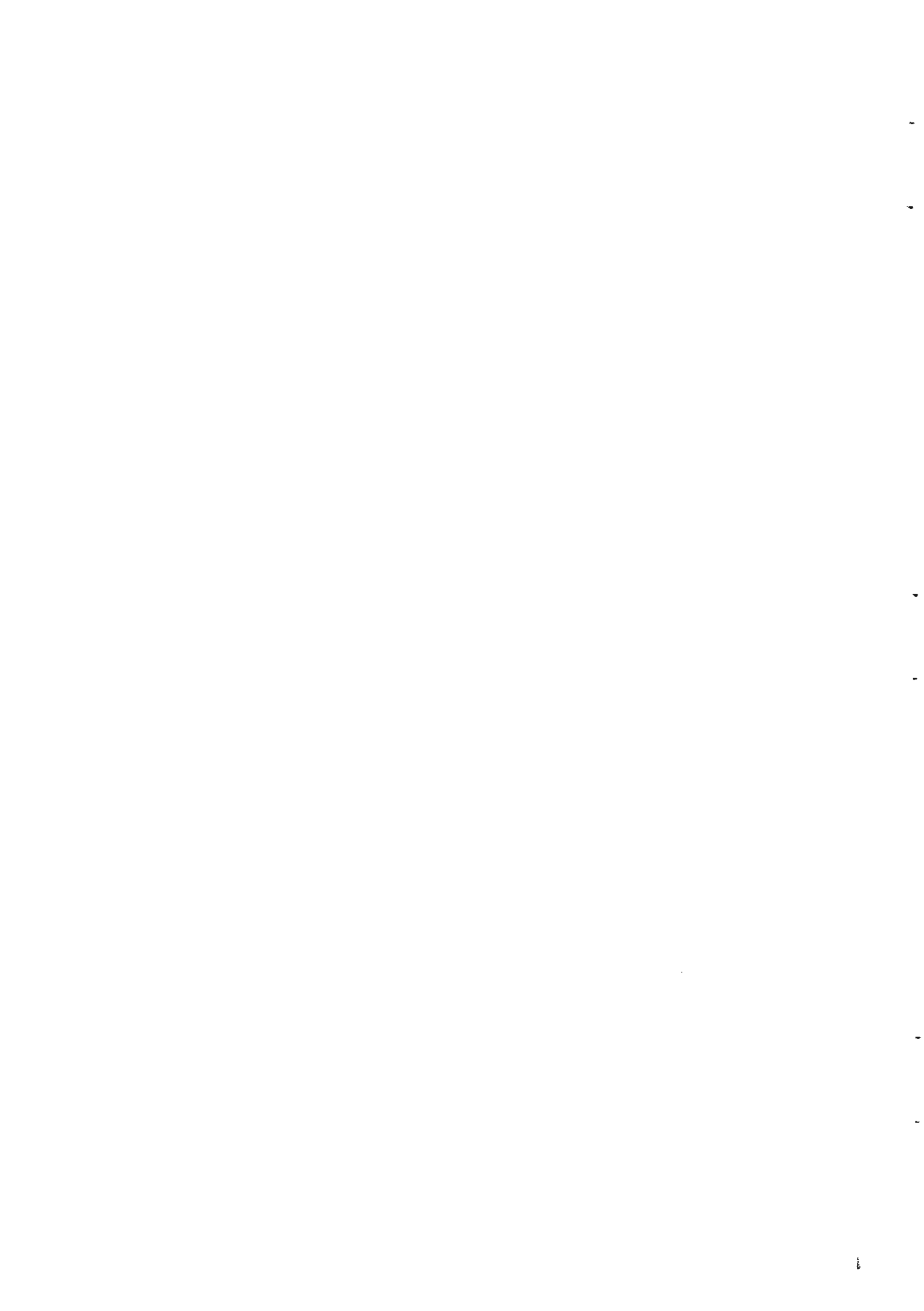
[61] Evi Arifin, Regional Heterogeneity of the Large Market and Production Base, in: *The Indonesian Economy: Entering a New Era*, Aris Ananta, Mulyana Soekarni, Sjamsul Arifin (eds), Singapore 2011, 231.

8. Other religions will eventually find their fulfillment in mine.
10. Other religions do not offer as deep a God-experience as my religion.

• Commonality pluralism
7. Different religions reveal different aspects of the same ultimate truth.
9. Different religions present different paths to the ultimate liberation.
12. The similarities among religions are a basis for building up a universal religion.
14. Different aspects of the same divine reality are experienced in different religions.

• Differential pluralism
11. Differences between religions are an opportunity for discovering truth.
13. Differences between religions are part of God's plan to save the world.
16. Differences between religions are a basis for mutual enrichment and growth.
18. Differences in God-experience made possible by various religions challenge the idea that God is one.

• Relativisitic pluralism
2. All religions provide an equally profound experience of God.
15. All religions are equally valid ways to ultimate truth.
17. All religions are equally valid paths to liberation.
20. Although there are many religions, at the deepest level there are no real differences.



Religion and State

Religion and State

Introduction

Leo J. Koffeman

Worldwide growth of religious pluralism constitutes one of the major challenges facing all religions, Christianity and Islam included, according to the American legal expert on church-state relations, Prof James E. Wood: "The worldwide distribution of communities of virtually all of the major religious traditions exacerbates the concern of all religions for guarantees of religious liberty and the protection of the religious rights of their own adherents and thereby for religious minorities generally".[1] This asks for political instruments, but it also requires religious communities to enhance dialogue and cooperation: "To be sure, the call for the recognition of religious human rights in the world community needs to be sounded by the religions themselves as well as by instruments of national and international law".[2]

In Indonesia Christians are a minority in terms of their number, whereas the vast majority of Indonesians adheres to Islam. The opposite is true for the Netherlands. Religious pluralism, therefore, challenges both faith communities in both countries to contribute to a fair assessment of the actual situation, and to strengthen joint efforts to further peace and justice. The articles in this section of the book have to be understood from this perspective.

Two Christian theologians give complementary accounts of the way religion-state relations have developed in Indonesia. Julianus Mojau mainly gives an historical survey in terms of institutional rela-

[1] James E. Wood, Jr., An Apologia for Religious Human Rights, in:, *Religious Human Rights in Global Perspective. Religious Perspectives*, J. Witte Jr. and J.D. van der Vyver (eds), The Hague etc. 1996, 455–483, 482.

[2] Ibid.

The Relation between Religion and State in the Pluralistic Indonesian Society

Julianus Mojau

This article aims to delineate prevailing views of the relation between religion and state as relevant in the context of a pluralistic Indonesian society.

As history shows, Indonesia is one of the countries whose citizens hold diverse religions and beliefs.[1] This historical fact continues to determine social reality.[2] The diversity of religions and beliefs serves as either a blessing or a disaster. In this context, state policies and religious awareness are required in order to establish an amicable and just pluralist society. This is where the importance of productive relations between religion and state lies.

First of all, let me try to show how the relation between religion and state was shaped through the history of Indonesia. In general, we have to note that there are different phases of religion and state relationships in the history of Indonesia. Each of those different phases, even though there are often overlaps, shows a different form. Based on this awareness, this article begins with an historical reading, and concludes with summarizing notes. The different types or models of relationships between religion and the state in Indonesian history will be presented in those final notes. This is done in order to prevent a

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[1] Cf. Bernard H.M. Vlekke, Nusantara: *A History of the East Indian Archipelago*. Cambridge, Massachusetts 1944; also W.F. Wertheim, *Indonesian Society in Transition: A Study of Social Change*. Bandung and The Hague 1956.

[2] Since Abdurrahman Wahid became President (1999), Indonesia has recognized 5 (five) religions, they are: Muslim, Christian (Catholic and Protestant), Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism.

simplification of the dynamics of religion and state relations in a very complex Indonesian history.

1. Pre-Independence Period: Kingdom/State-Religion versus People's Religion

Let me start with the period before Indonesia gained its independence. Long before Muslims and Christians had a strong influence on the life of Indonesia's society, Hinduism played a role. During the golden age of Hinduism, Hinduism and the Mataram Kingdom were closely connected. For example, in the history of the Mataram Kingdom we see how an 'official genealogy to authorize power' is constructed in order to institutionalize the dynasty of the Mataram kingdom; this is done through the concept of 'the unity of lay people and god' (*manunggal kawula-gusti*) – in which the king is seen as the worldly reincarnation of God.[3] Here we see that religion – in this case Hinduism – has become a tool to legitimate social stratification in society, i.e. servants (*kawula*) and lay people (*wong cilik*), as representing God's will. Hinduism became the religion of the Mataram Kingdom.

In that context, Islam appeared as a religion that emancipates the people. Kontowijoyo, while referring to W.F. Wertheim's conclusion, notes that historically Islam became one of the religious movements that encouraged a movement of economic emancipation among small traders in the coastal areas. Later on, during the era when the spirit of nationalism began to grow, according to Kontowijoyo,[4] Islam as the people's political-economic emancipation movement was accommodated by Sarekat Dagang Islam (SDI, the Muslim Traders Association) that in 1912 changed its name into Sarekat Islam (SI; Muslim Association). The spirit of Muslim religious emancipation is also visible in the religious spirit of Muhammadiyah (a Muslim organization in Indonesia) which later grew simultaneously with Indonesian nationalism.[5]

In the case of Christianity, we need to be careful not to fall into generalization. In some cases, especially during the periods of the Por-

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[3] Cf. Kuntowiwijoyo, *Paradigma Islam: Interpretasi untuk Aksi*. Bandung 1991, 148. Cf. Sartono Kartodirdjo, Pengantar Sejarah Nasional Baru: 1500-1900: *Dari Emporium Sampai Imperium*. Jakarta 1999, 48.

[4] Cf. Kuntowiwijoyo, *Paradigma Islam*, 147-151.

[5] Cf. Abdul Munir Mulkhan, Jejak Pembaharuan Memihak Kaum Duafa, in:, *Satu Abad Muhammadiyah:Gagasan Pembaharuan Sosial Keagamaan*, Syarifuddin Jurdi (ed.), Jakarta 2010, xxvii-lvii; also Abdul Munir Mulkhan, *Marhaenis Muhammadiayah*, Yogyakarta 2010.

tuguese trade and the Dutch East India Company as well as during some periods of the Dutch era, Christianity appeared more as an elite religion or a state religion or, to be more precise, the religion of the rulers in the colonized land.[6] However, in the case of Christianity, the mission institutions (Dutch: *zending*) developed Christianity more into a people's religion, in such a way that Christianity inspired economic and political emancipation among Indonesians. In the case of the Utrecht Mission Society (*Utrechtsche Zendingsvereeniging*; UZV) in Halmahera, for example, the missionary played a role as a motivator that stimulated economic and cultural emancipation among the people, through farming, education and health ventures.[7] We can also mention the case of the mission leaders conference in 1941, in Karangpandan (near Solo) that discussed the importance of political emancipation awareness among Christians in Indonesia and the independence of congregations that were the fruit of mission, along with a stronger awareness of Indonesian nationalism.[8]

The notes above show that religions in Indonesia, at least in the case of Islam and Christianity, can serve as the banner of struggle or a means for the lay person to fight against suppressing hegemonic powers. Here, religions serve as people's religion; religions as grasped by the people confront the state's authority.

2. Post-Independence Period: Nationalism-Religion (Pancasila) versus State-Religion

During the independence period, the discussion about a format for religion-nation relationships in the pluralistic Indonesian society became more intensive than in the pre-independence period. Social scientists and theologians – especially Muslim and Christian intellectuals – actively discussed the question of what form of religion-state relations is relevant to a pluralistic Indonesian society. Why is it only Muslims and Christians who discussed this issue most intensively? I think that this is related to the competition between the two religions with Middle Eastern origins regarding social, economic and political influence.

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[6] Cf. Th. van den End. Ragi Cerita: Sejarah Gereja di Indonesia I: 1500-1860. Jakarta 1985. 22-35.

[7] Cf. Julianus Mojau. Partisipasi GMIH dalam Pembangunan Daerah: Kemandirian adalah Pilar Partisipasi Gereja dalam Pembangunan Daerah di Era Otonomi Daerah. Presentation at Study Meeting of the Synod of the GMIH. 27 August 2012.

[8] Cf. M. Abednego. *Suatu Partisipasi*, Jakarta 1976, 27-29.

During the first decade of Indonesia's independence, 1945-1955, the spirit of nationalism was directly linked with different parts of Indonesian society. The spirit of nationalism – as the spirit of social, economic and political emancipation – among Indonesian intellectuals in the mid-20th century was so strong that Daniel Dhakidae once remarked that nationalism among Indonesian intellectuals had become their 'new religion'.[9] In this case, the differences in terms of religion and culture had been immersed in a spirit of ethical nationalism. Here, the religions served as religious nationalism.

Religions, as an integral part of Indonesian nationalism, experienced a setback after the first General Elections (*Pemilihan Umum*, 1955) and the Constituent Assembly Convention (*Sidang-sidang Majelis Konstituante*, 1956-1959), especially in the context of the discussion on the philosophical foundation of the *Republik Indonesia*. Religion-based political parties – especially Muslim parties -- wanted Islam to be the philosophical foundation of the Republik Indonesia. Therefore, there was a will to turn Islam into a state religion, like state religion in the history of Christianity in the Middle Ages: although neither the case nor the background are similar, it shows the same spirit. According to Kuntowijoyo,[10] Soekarno – who appeared on the political scene without bringing about a religious ideology – finally stopped the ambition of some Muslim politicians by passing the 5 July 1959 decree.[11] Through this decree, Soekarno, during his 'guided democracy' leadership, wanted to restore the religions in Indonesia as 'religions of Indonesian nationalism', i.e. religions that support the spirit of nationalism and the spirit of revolution.

Soeharto, after taking over power from Soekarno in 1966, ruled until 21 May 1998. He was supported by military power, and he was more systematic in marginalizing Muslim politics.[12] Through his success, Soeharto made religions a power in Indonesian modernization. Soeharto's political modernization ran well for approximately thirty years, because it was fully supported by Indonesian religious activists. Some Muslim and Christian intellectuals and theologians, for example, were the 'keynote speakers' of the modernization process as the

[9] Cf. Daniel Dhakidae, Memahami Rasa Kebangsaan dan Menyimak Bangsa sebagai Komunitas-Komunitas Terbayang, in: *Imagined Communities – Komunitas-Komunitas Terbayang*, terj. Omi Itan Naomi, Benedict Anderson (ed.), Yogyakarta 2001, xvi.

[10] Cf. Kuntowiwijoyo, *Paradigma Islam*, 155.

[11] Cf. Ahmad Syafii Maarif, *Islam dalam Bingkai Keindonesiaan dan Kemanusiaan*, Bandung 2009, 135-139.

[12] Cf. M. Rusli Karim, *Negara dan Peminggiran Islam Politik*, Yogyakarta 1999.

implementation of Pancasila.[13] We have to admit that Soeharto in his first decade of rule sought to use religions as a driving force in the modernization process for the development of Indonesian society. This was why some Muslims and Christians intellectuals and theologians were willing to use their religions as the motor/locomotive of Indonesian modernization.[14] Gradually, however, Soeharto's power forced the nation's power to become hegemonic through the 'sole principle politics' (*politik asas tunggal*) as regulated in "Law No 8 year 1985" (*UU Nomor 8 Tahun 1985*) concerning Societal Organization (*Organisasi Kemasyarakatan*). Through these sole principle politics, religions were gradually co-opted and subordinated to the state's authority. As a result, religions lost their autonomy and this weakened the critical attitude of religious intellectuals toward the more demonic state's hegemonic authority. In relation to the more hegemonic authority of this 'New Order', some parties, both Muslim and Christian, tried to articulate a model of religion-state relations that is in accordance with the spirit of liberation theology.[15] Here, religion and state are two different powers that antagonistically confront each other.

After the fall of the New Order regime, religious leaders in Indonesia fought over social-political influence. As a result, political parties with religious labels and principles emerged. Later, this triggered social violence on behalf of religions. The case of Ahmadiyah (a strain of Islam) and the destruction of some places of worship in the last couple of years are the most obvious examples. In such circumstances, the state seems to be very weak and powerless. The state seems to have been subdued by religious sentiments that destroy humanity.

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[13] I have tried to expose this issue in my dissertation (2004) published by BPK Gunung Mulia. Cf. Julianus Mojau, *Meniakan atau Merangkul; Pergulatan Teologis Kristen Protestan dengan Islam Politik di Indonesia*. Jakarta 2012; meanwhile among Muslims, cf. Yudi Latif, *Inteligens Muslim dan Kuasa: Genealogi Inteligensia Muslim Indonesia Abad ke-20*, Bandung 2005.

[14] Among Protestants, for example, we mention T.B. Simatupang and Eka Darmaputra. Cf. T.B. Simatupang, *Iman Kristen dan Pancasila*, Jakarta 1985; id., *Kehadiran Kristen dalam Perang, Revolusi dan Pembangunan: Berjuang Mengamalkan Pancasila dalam Terang Iman*, Jakarta 1986; Eka Darmaputra, *Pancasila: Identitas dan Modernitas – Tinjauan Etis dan Budaya*, Jakarta 1987; for the social-theological view of Eka Darmaputra cf. Martin L. Sinaga et al., *Pergulatan Kehadiran Kristen di Indonesia: Teks-Teks Terpilih Eka Darmaputra*, Jakarta 2001. Meanwhile among Muslims we can mention the social-theological views of Abdurrahman Wahid, Nucholish Madjid, Djohan Efendi, and Lihat Greg Barton, in: *Gagasan Islam Liberal di Indonesia: Pemikiran Neo-Modernisme Nurcholish Madjid, Djohan Effendi, Ahmad Mahib, dan Abdurrahman Wahid*. Abdurrahman Wahid et al. (eds). Jakarta 1999.

[15] Cf., for example, some writings in: *Agama, Demokrasi dan Keadilan*. M. Imam Azis, et al. (eds). Jakarta 1993.

Some people give voice to a separation model of religion-state relations. They emphasize that religion is a citizen's personal affair. Religion is the individual's private issue. However, this model does not get enough support from religious leaders in Indonesia. The religious leaders urge the significance of the role of religions in public space. This role, nevertheless, has to be placed within an awareness of Indonesian nationalism as based on Pancasila, without having to make Pancasila a closed ideology. Among Protestants, for example, A.A. Yewangoe, General Chairman of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia – similarly to what T.B. Simatupang and Eka Darmaputra did at the beginning of the New Order – re-emphasized the effort to support the cause.[16] On the Muslim side, we have Djohan Efendi[17] and Ahmad Syafii Maarif[18]. In the midst of the trend among Muslim politicians to emphasize the significance of the 'Jakarta Charter' (Piagam Jakarta),[19] Ahmad Syafii Maarif, former chairman of Muhammadiyah, wrote as follows:

> In order to strengthen the sense of being Indonesians and the sense of humanity, Piagam Jakarta [Jakarta Charter (read: the goal of state-religion relations, J.M.)] does not need to be viewed from a legal formal perspective. However, the spirit of it, i.e. equal execution of justice for all citizens of Indonesia, without any discrimination, needs to be kept. Meanwhile, Pancasila has to be open to adopt moral sources from the existing religions in Indonesia and Islam has to give a major contribution.[20]

If what Syafii Maarif says above is accepted as representing the majority of Indonesians who yearn to preserve Pancasila as Indonesia's philosophical foundation, we can conclude that religion as the state's ideology has declined, even though Indonesians still consider the significance of the role of religions in Indonesia's social life. Therefore, all efforts to make Indonesia a religion-state (in which the state is subordinated to religion) or a state-religion (in which religion is subordinated to the state), as well as efforts to make religion a personal affair,

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[16] Cf. the trilogy of A.A. Yewangoe. (1) *Tidak Ada Negara Agama. Satu Nusa. Satu Bangsa.* Jakarta 2009; (2) *Tidak Ada Penumpang Gelap: Warga Gereja. Warga Bangsa.* Jakarta 2009; and (3) *Tidak Ada Ghetto: Gereja di dalam Dunia.* Jakarta 2009. All published by *BPK Gunung Mulia.* Cf. also for the Muslim view the debate as discussed in: Abdul Mu'nim D.Z., *Islam di Tengah Arus Transisi.* Jakarta 2000.

[17] Cf. Djohan Effendi. *Pluralisme dan Kebebasan Beragama.* Yogyakarta 2011.

[18] Cf. Maarif, *Islam.*

[19] Discussion on Piagam Jakarta (Jakarta Charter) flourished again among Muslim intellectuals after the fall of New Order regime. Cf. Mu'nim. *Islam.*

[20] Maarif. *Islam.* 311.

will not be easily accepted by Indonesian society with its pluralistic culture.

3. Four Types of Religion and State Relations

The historical explanation above, which is more a simplification, shows us that there has never been a separation between religion and state in Indonesia. What we see is four tendencies.

First, a co-optative relation, where the state co-opts religions into legitimacy tools of the state's authority. This is obvious both in the pre-independence and post-independence periods, especially in the Old Order where religions are co-opted into legitimacy tools of chauvinistic nationalism and in the New Order where religions are co-opted into legitimacy tools of an ideological modernization project.

Second, the tendency of a relation of mutual subordination, especially when a particular regime craves to preserve its authority as the absolute power and/or when some parties demand to make religions the state's ideology. This is obvious in both the Old and New Order, and in a particular way it is also present in 'Reformation era' or transition era, after 1998.

Third, the tendency of a symbiotic relation, a mutually beneficial relation pattern. At a first glance, this pattern is very good. However, if we critically read this pattern, it in fact causes religion and state to fall into collusive relationships. The state can protect religious interests provided that the religions do not question the state's authority. In contrast, religions can protect the state's authority interests and/or legitimate the state's projects, no matter how destructive they are, provided that religions can obtain the facilities they need. This tendency is obvious during the Indonesian pre-independence period and in the post-independence period, especially in the New Order.

Fourth, the tendency of an antagonistic relation. Here, religion serves as the power of a people's movement that confronts the state's authority. It is obvious in the Indonesian pre-independence period. In some cases, yet more conceptual, it can be seen in the form of the efforts of some parties in articulating the spirit of liberation theology in the late 1970s and towards the early 1980s.

The four tendencies above will not be enough to help to amicably construct an Indonesian pluralistic society. In the first, second and third tendencies, religions in Indonesia lose their autonomy and prophetic spirit. This makes the state appear so weak that it is incapable

of upholding the law. Meanwhile, in the fourth tendency, we will find continuous conflicting relations. However, a separation model, as it is being carried out in secular countries, does not help to mend this situation either. This is because, in this case, religion no longer plays a role in public spaces: it remains in an individualistic private space.

In the pluralistic Indonesian society where it is difficult to realize separation between religion and public space, a model or pattern of religion and state relationships that goes beyond the four tendencies above needs to be developed. Here, equal critical partnership can be considered. In this model of religion and state relations, both religion and state are merely instruments to uphold human values and social justice. Religion plays a role in exerting its critical function toward demonic state authority. In contrast, the state will act justly toward religious groups in Indonesia and act firmly with regard to the destructive articulation of a spirit of diversity.

Religion and State in Indonesia. A Christian Perspective

Zakaria J. Ngelow

Indonesia is a pluralistic country, from a cultural as well as a religious perspective. While Indonesia is not an Islamic state, it is the biggest Muslim country, with a Muslim population of about 200 million people. Indonesians live in an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands, they consist of more than 600 ethnic groups with their respective ethnic religion, and they speak some 700 different languages. World religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity – came to Indonesia at different times. Their coming is related to the development of political centers of kingdoms and sultanates in various places in Indonesia. This short article is an historical sketch of the relation between religions and the state in modern Indonesia.[1]

1. Background

Hinduism arrived from India as early as the 1st century A.D. Then Buddhism came, in the 6th century, and Islam around the 11th century. The development of these three world religions was closely related to political circumstances, and the development of centers of political power. The first kingdoms in Indonesia were the Hindu kingdoms of

[1] Cf. in English: Robert Ken Arakaki, *Religion and State Building in Post Colonial Southeast Asia – A Comparative Analysis of State Building Strategies in Indonesia and Malaysia*, Honolulu 2004; Luthfi Assyaukanie, *Islam and the Secular State in Indonesia*. Singapore 2009; Benjamin Flemming Intan, *Public Religion and the Pancasiala Based State of Indonesia. An Ethnical and Socilogical Analysis*. New York 2006; Paul H. Nitze, *Religion and Religiosity in the Philippines and Indonesia. Essays on State, Society, and Public Creeds*, Washington 2006.

Kutai (ca. 350-400) in East Kalimantan, Tarumanagara (ca. 350-700) in West Java, and Kalinga (ca.650-850) in Central Java, as well as both the Mataram and the Majapahit kingdom in Central Java.

Buddhism is the second oldest religion in Indonesia after Hinduism, arriving around the 6th century. Buddhism is famous for the Borobudur temple in Central Java, built in the 9th century by the Sailendra dynasty. The great maritime kingdom of Srivijaya (7th – 14th century) in South Sumatra was also a Buddhist kingdom. The history of Buddhism in Indonesia is closely related to the history of Hinduism, as a number of empires based on the Dharmic culture were established around the same period. The Indonesian archipelago has witnessed the rise and fall of powerful Buddhist empires such as the Sailendra dynasty, and the Mataram and Srivijaya empires. The arrival of Buddhism in the Indonesian archipelago started with the trading activity that began on the maritime Silk Road between Indonesia and India.[2]

Both Indian religions developed a concept of political power in two aspects, i.e. a moral-ethical (the characteristics of a good king) and a mythical legitimization (a king is a divine incarnation). The specific relation of the Mataram sultans with the deity queen of the South Sea in Java is much alive in popular belief. Another religious concept of political power in Javanese is the messianic hope of the coming of Ratu Adil (the just King) that developed when people suffered injustice or poverty under a regime. In pre-Islamic kingdoms in South Sulawesi the concept of *tomanurun* (the one who descended from heaven) was applied to the origin of different monarchical dynasties. The ideal moral-ethical character of the monarchy was expressed in an old Malay aphorism: *Raja adil, raja disembah, Raja lalim, raja disanggah* (A just king is to be served, an unjust king is to be rejected).

Muslim historians have claimed that Islam already arrived in Indonesia a century after Islam emerged. But historic evidence has been found from the 11th century, such as Islamic inscriptions on gravestones and written reports of a few travelers. Islam gained political power in the 13th century in the Pasai sultanate of North Sumatera. The spread of Islam in the archipelago resulted in various sultanates, such as Aceh (since the 16th century), Banten (the mid 16th century), Banjar, Demak (since 1478), Gowa (that became an Islamic sultanate in 1601), Mataram (the successor of the Majapahit, 17th century), Ter-

[2] Cf. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism_in_Indonesia.

nate (1475), etc. The period of Islam almost coincided with the arrival of Western colonial powers. Three Western European countries, Portugal, Spain, and the Netherlands, contested to win a monopoly in the spice trade. In the 16th century case of Portugal and the Ternate sultanate in the North Moluccas, the native identified either with Islam (Ternate) or with Portuguese Roman Catholic Christianity. Resistance to Dutch colonialism in the 19th century in Java (the Diponegoro war) and Sumatra (the Paderi and Aceh wars) carried Islamic symbols.

2. Against Islamic Shari'a

The Indonesian nationalism movement for independence – begun in the second decade of the 20th century – also made use of Islamic symbols. Eventually, communism and (secular) nationalism emerged as competitors to the Islamic ideology. An abortive *coup d'état* by Communist elements in 1926 ended in strong measures by the colonial government. Communism was banned and its leaders were banished to different colonial prisons. Some young followers of communism struggled underground. The Islamic political movement was weakened by internal conflicts, while nationalist leaders divided into different factions of co-operation and non-cooperation with the colonial government. It was in 1918 that a small Christian political party, with pro-colonial political views, was founded among the Indo-Dutch and joined by some indigenous Christians. But in the 1920s some young Indonesian Christian students emerged as pro-Indonesian nationalist Christians. Soon after Indonesian independence, they founded an Indonesian Christian political party.

An Indonesian independence committee was set up toward the end of the Japanese military occupation. On 1 June 1945, a sub-committee – Panitia Sembilan (Committee of Nine) – concluded the draft of a Constitutional Preamble, later known as Piagam Jakarta (the Jakarta Charter), in which the future Indonesian independent state would be based on five pillars. The formulation of the fifth pillar, the religious basis, was a compromise between the Islamic and the secular nationalist movement, in a controversial seven-word clause containing the right for Indonesian Muslim citizens to apply the Islamic *shari'a*. But on 18 August 1945, the day after the Indonesian independence was proclaimed, Christian and other nationalist leaders from eastern Indonesia objected to the Islamic clause in the Preamble draft. The clause was reformulated into a neutral religious phrase, and positioned as the

first pillar. This rejection of discrimination and of any tendency to apply Islamic *shari'a* became a crucial point for Indonesian Christian political standpoints in favor of a democratic pluralistic nation. The motivation behind such standpoints is a strong commitment to uphold religious freedom and other human rights principles.

The five Pillars of Indonesian *Pancasila* ideology are:

1. Belief in the one and only God;
2. A just and civilized humanity;
3. The unity of Indonesia;
4. Democracy guided by inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representatives;
5. Social justice for the all of the people of Indonesia.

With Pancasila as its ideology, Indonesia is neither a religious nor a secular state. But the religiosity of the people and the existence of the Divine are recognized in the nation's affairs. Some scholars, therefore, preferred the term "religious democratic society". The state is based on the Omnipotence of the Divinity, and it guarantees the freedom of everyone to have her/his own religion and to perform religious duties according to her/his religion and faith.3 In January 1946, the Ministry of Religious Affairs was founded, initially as a gesture of compensation to the Muslim majority, but then it was assigned to serve the religious interest of all citizens. Recently there are (only) six religions that are officially recognized by the government: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity (Protestant, Catholic), and Confucianism. The last one was added by a presidential decree by Abdurrahman Wahid. Local or indigenous religions were (unfairly) treated as sects of Hinduism.

Among some Indonesian Muslims the ideal of an Islamic state continue to burn. In the past, some separatist rebellious movements were founded in different places (West Java, Aceh, South Sulawesi, South Kalimantan), but all were crushed by military operations. The last decade has seen the influence of global Islamic movements such as the Salawist and Hizbuth Tahrir, and even the radicals, have emerged in Indonesia. But the majority of Indonesian Muslims, including the major Islamic organizations such as Nahdatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, opt for the Pancasila state. Nevertheless, Islamist politicians managed to develop various *shari'a*-inspired regulations at regency or provincial levels. Anti-alcohol policies, a dress code for

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[3] Cf. chapter 29 of the Constitution.

women, the ability to read Al-Qur'an, and other regulations have been applied.

3. A Christian Party

Indonesian Christian political thought and practices were developed under the strong influence of a Dutch theologian and statesman, Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) with his party, the *Anti-Revolutionaire Partij*. The main influence of Kuyperian political views on Indonesian Christian political circles was that political powers come from God and have to be accountable to God; that Christians should develop their own potential to be able to compete in the socio-political life of the country; and that freedom of the church (religions) is a basic requirement for a free nation.

From 1945 to 1971, a Christian political party, Parkindo – Indonesia Christian Party – was the only political party among Protestants. Some Christians were active in non-Christian political parties, such as the secular nationalist or communist political parties. Roman Catholics had their own Indonesian Catholic Party. Both merged with other political parties when the New Order regime under Suharto in the early 1970s forced political parties to be limited to only three political parties: the Golongan Karya (Workers Group) as the government party, the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (Development Unity Party) of the Islamic politicians, and the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (Indonesia Democratic Party), into which the Protestant and Catholic parties merged.

After the fall of Suharto, freedom of political expression revived. People organized various political parties to compete in the general elections. Christians were also caught in the freedom euphoria, and founded some Christian political parties. From time to time it was clear that Christians did not support any exclusive religious political party. The same can be seen among Muslims. Another interesting phenomenon was the significant number of church ministers that took part in power politics, and competed for legislative positions at various levels. Some got enough votes, but the majority failed. Churches developed different regulations, but generally a church minister has to choose, either to serve the church or to serve a political party.

But, on the other hand, some churches openly support certain candidates for political positions, such as local or national legislators, regents and governors. This kind of open support is practically jeop-

ardized if the supported candidate loses the election; theologically it betrays the nature of the church as if it were subordinated to certain political interests. It is relevant here to note that Indonesian Christians/churches need a reorientation in order to develop a non-sectarian political interest, and to promote common justice, peace and prosperity.

While Christians politically stand for a democratic and free state, Indonesian church leaders apply Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Rom 13: 1-5 – submission to the government) as their basic attitude with respect to the government. Since the colonial period, Christianity has not developed a critical stance towards the government. Under the New Order, Indonesian churches in the ecumenical movement developed a basic approach to church participation in national development programs. It was a combination of the positive and the creative, and of critical but realistic attitudes. Critical but realistic indicates the application of biblical-theological norms to any program in that its process and goals must be in line with biblical ethics of justice and peace.

4. Intolerance

Since the early 1990s, toward the end of the Suharto regime, interfaith problems emerged. Some churches in various places were burned or attacked. The years following the *Reformasie* of 1998 were the worst, as communal conflicts, connected with religious (i.e. Christian and Islam) identities, broke out in Ambon, Halmahera, Poso and other places, taking thousands of lives and displacing many thousands more.

In the last few years, interfaith intolerance was expressed towards other minority religious groups, such as Ahmadiah and Shi'ite Muslims. Their communities were attacked and banned. People have regretted the increased intolerance, but more than that, deep disappointment was expressed over the government's attitude of indifference to the problem. Security personnel did not protect the victims, and even sided with the attacking mobs. As formulated in the Constitution, the state should guarantee the freedom of each individual to choose and exercise her/his own religion. The government or any religious community has no right to judge any doctrines and practices of another religious community.

Interfaith problems in Indonesia emerged in the late 1960s because church membership increased after the communists were banned, and citizens were obliged to be members of one of the recog-

nized religions in 1966. In the 1970s the government issued regulations on interfaith relations, limiting the freedom to construct church buildings. There are plans to issue a regulation on interfaith harmony; it will probably be more restrictive towards minorities. In the past decade, the government has founded a forum of religious leaders at different levels, in order to develop interfaith harmony, but in most cases the forum functions to legitimize discrimination against Christians and other minorities, denying their right to have buildings for worship.

The bright side of the interfaith situation in Indonesia is the commitment of youth interfaith groups to uphold religious freedom and to develop peaceful cooperation. Since the early 1990s, interfaith groups emerged in various places to develop interfaith dialogue and cooperation, addressing social problems.

It is also significant that a movement has emerged against the tendency to deviate from the original foundations of the Republic. This movement seeks to revive the basic foundations of the nation, i.e. the *Pancasila* (the five pillars), the UUD 1945 (the Constitution), the NKRI (Indonesia as a single republic state), and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in diversity).

As a religiously and culturally pluralistic nation, the future of Indonesia will depend on the healthy development of democracy and freedom, correlating with the socio-economic and education level of the people. The founders of the nation invented *Pancasila* as a good common base for a pluralistic nation. But abuse of power under *Pancasila* in the past has caused people to be confused and to reject the ideology. A revitalization of *Pancasila* is needed – a huge task in the current situation of a country that is characterized by corruption among its power executors.

Religion and State in the Netherlands. A Christian Perspective

Leo J. Koffeman

Hardly any constitutional principle is causing more public discussion in the Netherlands nowadays than the one usually described as 'the separation of church and state'. It is a concept that is being understood in quite different ways, and – in my view – one that is often misunderstood. It is a concept that is supposed to be decisive of the relation between religions and state in most European countries, as part and parcel of the concept of a democratic constitutional state. Nevertheless, the way it is being interpreted and implemented is very different, if we, for instance, compare the situation in the Netherlands with that in neighboring countries like Belgium, France, Germany and the United Kingdom.[1]

In this contribution I intend to focus on three areas. First, I will give a concise description of the way religion and state are mutually related in the Netherlands. Secondly, a survey of theological positions on this issue will be presented, focusing on the official position of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PCN) as visible in two recent reports. In a third and final section, I want to identify the main theological questions that need to be discussed, both in an intra-Christian, intercontextual dialogue and in an interreligious conversation. A provisional personal response to these questions will be included.

It is my hope that this article will contribute to finding common ground in Christian-Muslim dialogue on issues that are immensely

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[1] *Cf. Legal Position of Churches and Church Autonomy*, Hildegard Warnink (ed.), Leuven 2001.

relevant, with a view to a just and peaceful future of this world, and more particularly of Indonesia and the Netherlands.

1. A picture of religion-state relationships in the Dutch context

The Netherlands is proud to be a democratic constitutional state under the rule of law. In public debate, nobody would speak against that. Even those who suggest the need for certain constitutional changes like, for instance, the introduction of decisive referenda, only do so by referring to democracy and the rule of law as their criteria.

Usually, five criteria for a truly democratic constitutional state under the rule of law are identified:[2]

The principle of *legality*: in a constitutional state it is justice, not the government, that has final authority; all powers, including the executive, parliament and the judicatory, have to function under the rule of law;

Constitutionalism: the fundamental structures of state are laid down in a Constitution, and they are entrenched, i.e. they can only be amended by means of a special and more complicated procedure (e.g. final decision only after new elections, two-thirds majority vote);

Democracy, i.e. those who bear governmental responsibility, do so by virtue of a mandate given by the citizens, represented by a parliament; basically, all citizens have equal opportunities to determine what should be law;

The inclusion of fundamental *human rights* in constitutional law (preferably in the Constitution as such, including entrenchment), on the same level as the fundamental structures of state; in this respect also the recognition of international treaties/conventions on human rights is relevant; part of it is the protection of cultural, ethnic and religious minorities;

Legal protection, i.e. the separation of executive, legislative and judicatory powers, and the right of all citizens to appeal – within a 'fair trial' framework -- to an independent and impartial judicatory against decisions of the executive and the legislative, in order to prevent any kind of arbitrariness of power abuse. For the same purpose, public authorities have the 'monopoly of violence'.

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[2] Cf. Paul Cliteur, De democratische rechtsstaat aan het einde van de geschiedenis, in: *Cultuurfilosofie vanuit levensbeschouwelijke perspectieven*, Edith Brugmans (ed.), Open Universiteit 1994, 9-41.

Basically, the Kingdom of the Netherlands meets these standards, although some aspects of state structures may be challenged, like the fact that citizens cannot go to court to appeal to the Constitution against statutory law, or the fact that the highest court in administrative law, the High Council (*Hoge Raad*), also plays a role in the legislative process. Usually, the system is referred to as a *social* constitutional state, which means that public authorities have an obligation to promote solidarity and well being (education, health care, etc.).

In practice, terms like 'state' and 'government' can cause misunderstanding, as far as these might fail to convey the fact that a complicated system of public authorities, operative on different levels, and differentiated according to executive, legislative and judicatory roles, is in place. Although the Dutch Constitution does not explicitly speak of the 'separation of church and state', the concept is evident from the very fact that churches have no formal place in fundamental structures of state, as presented in the Constitution. This means that the church has no institutionally established responsibility within the governmental system. Churches have no advantages compared with any other institution with regard to their means to influence politics. No church has seats in parliament, like the Church of England in the British House of Lords. No right of approval by the church of any governmental decision is recognized. In this respect Article 1 of the Constitution gives the leading principle:

> All persons in the Netherlands shall be treated equally in equal circumstances. Discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, political opinion, race, or sex or on any other grounds whatsoever shall not be permitted.

Of course, the prohibition of discrimination includes the prohibition of privileges as well. Reciprocally, public authorities have no institutionally established responsibility as to the way churches set up their religious life. The Civil Code recognizes the right of religious communities to organize themselves legally as 'churches' (*kerkgenootschappen*), i.e. as a specific type of legal entities, and, therefore, to be 'ruled by their private charter'.[3] Most Christian churches claim this right. The same goes for the Jewish communities (synagogues). Although Muslim communities (mosques) have equal rights to do the same, they usually prefer the legal form of an 'association' or a civil-law foundation to organize communal life.

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[3] Cf. Art. 2:2 BW (*Burgerlijk Wetboek*, i.e. Civil Code).

The right of Article 2:2 BW is based on the freedom of religion as one of the fundamental rights incorporated in the Constitution as well. Article 6 reads as follows:

> 1. Everyone shall have the right to manifest freely his religion or belief, either individually or in community with others, without prejudice to his responsibility under the law.
> 2. Rules concerning the exercise of this right other than in buildings and enclosed places may be laid down by Act of Parliament for the protection of health, in the interest of traffic and to combat or prevent disorders.

The wording 'religion or belief' (also in Art. 1) includes non-religious world views like humanism. For the religious communities it is important that religious freedom is guaranteed, not only as an individual right but also as a right to manifest one's religion or belief *in community with others.*

The essence of the separation of church and state is given with this constitutional framework. Since the 'liberal revolution' of 1848, church-state relationships have been more or less stable. The separation of church and state implies that the Kingdom of the Netherlands is a secular state. In no way, however, does it as such exclude the possibility of cooperation between civil authorities and religious organizations, although quite a few Dutch opinion leaders use to say so! As long as the principle of equal treatment of all citizens is not violated, cooperation between civil authorities or public institutions and all kinds of private organizations (including churches, synagogues and mosques) is possible; this has developed over the last decades in many areas of society, and all private organizations involved have to meet the same quality standards. Excluding religious organizations in this respect would be as improper as favoring them. Formal cooperation with religious communities exists in several areas. On the national level an Interchurch Contact on Government Issues (*Interkerkelijk Contact in Overheidszaken*, CIO), including a number of subcommittees, takes care of cooperation in specific areas like chaplaincy in prisons, in the army and in hospitals, and the maintenance of our cultural heritage (e.g. monumental church buildings), on behalf of Christian and Jewish communities. Government cooperation with Muslims takes place in a parallel body, the Muslim Government Contact Body (*Contactorgaan Moslims Overheid*). Chaplaincy in prisons and in the army is being taken care of by all religions and beliefs proportionally, and financed by the government. Chaplaincy in hospitals is usually part of normal health care, financed by health insurance. The govern-

ment assists financially in maintaining church buildings of historical value. CIO also forms a platform for advising the government in more general legal issues, e.g., legislation in sensitive ethical areas like euthanasia or family law. Apart from this civil authorities on all levels, from local to national, cooperate with religious (and non-religious) organizations in all areas of life, like education, social work, cultural activities, broadcasting, recreation, and sport.

Religious freedom is not unlimited: it is guaranteed "without prejudice to his responsibility under the law".[4] As long as church law is not blatantly in conflict with civil law or with the Penal Code, churches are free.

In practice, it is the judicatory that has the responsibility to determine the limitations of religious freedom, especially if there is a collision with other fundamental rights. Case law is decisive. What if people appeal to religious freedom in order to stifle the rights of women or homosexuals, or to infringe corporal integrity? From the perspective of case law, so far churches have the right to exclude women from ordination, but Christian schools cannot dismiss homosexual teachers for the sole reason of their sexual orientation. Jews and Muslims are allowed to circumcise young boys, but in the case of female circumcision, the fundamental right of corporal integrity prevails. Many additional issues and case law decisions could be presented, and public discussion on such issues is vivid. For many decades the freedom of religion seemed to be prevalent in nearly all instances, but recently this trend seems to have disappeared.

It cannot be denied that such religious freedom is no longer self-evident in the eyes of many people in the Netherlands. The impact of 9/11 is indisputable, and the same goes for two political murders – Pim Fortuyn, 2002, and Theo van Gogh, 2004 – of which the latter was clearly religiously motivated, with a Muslim background. More recently, the shocking disclosure of sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic Church, has severely damaged the image of religion.

There is no room to give an overall exposition of the developments in society that have led to such major changes in public opinion. It may suffice to say that cultural aspects (individualization, the development of a multicultural and multireligious society), as well as economic aspects (globalization!), and political aspects (European integration) play a role.

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[4] *Constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands*, Art. 6.1.

2. A survey of theological positions

The democratic constitutional state under the rule of law is a modern phenomenon. Therefore, there is, of course, no long-lasting theological tradition regarding this political arrangement. Nevertheless, we can speak of centuries of theological thinking with regard to the role of state authorities.

Hardly any theological issue has been so influenced by contextual factors as this one. Especially after the schism of 1054 between the Western and the Eastern Church, the Orthodox or Byzantine tradition – in Russia, Georgia, the Balkans and, with modifications, in the Middle East – developed in a direction significantly different from Western thinking. The still current concept of 'symphonia' implies strong links between throne and altar in, for instance, Russia. In this contribution we have to ignore that part of Christianity. But even the Western tradition is all but uniform. Basically, three streams have to be distinguished.

For centuries, Roman Catholicism claimed in fact authority in worldly affairs as well. In medieval times the Emperor and the Pope contended over such issues, sometimes using armed violence. Even in the 19th century official Roman Catholic teaching rejected 'modern liberalist' ideas about freedom of religion, rejecting the 'error' that: "[I]n the present day it is no longer expedient that the Catholic religion should be held as the only religion of the State, to the exclusion of all other forms of worship".[5] It is only at the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) that this position changed dramatically. The Decree on Religious Freedom *Dignitatis Humanae* says:

> This Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits.[6]

It is important to understand the basic argument for this (change in) position. DH recognizes that "the exercise of religion, of its very nature, consists before all else in those internal, voluntary and free acts

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[5] *Syllabus Errorum*, 1864, par. 77. http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/P)SYLL.HTM accessed Febr. 22. 2013.

[6] *Dignitatis Humanae*, par. 2. http://www.vatican.va./archive/hist_councils/ii-council/documents/vat-ii_decl-19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html accessed Febr. 22. 2013.

whereby man sets the course of his life directly toward God. No merely human power can either command or prohibit acts of this kind".[7]

The Reformation, a 16th century schism in the Western church, gave birth to a number of Protestant traditions. On the one hand, the so-called Radical Reformation (Anabaptists, Mennonites) tended to be extremely suspicious of worldly powers. Some of them developed a revolutionary ethos. Others, on the contrary, alienated themselves as much as possible from any connection with the authorities: they refused to take up arms, or to swear an oath. In some cases they were seen as a danger to the existing order, which could result in political persecution.

On the other hand, for some centuries a strong link between the church and secular authorities continued to exist in many countries, especially when the official or public church became Protestant as a consequence of political decision-making. Kings, princes and other state authorities, were eager to cooperate with the church because of its dominant role in society.

Only gradually was more room given to 'free churches'. In the Netherlands, for instance, the Netherlands Reformed Church was the public church. Smaller groups of 'dissenters' like Arminians, Mennonites and Lutherans were tolerated as long as they were not very visible. The same was true for the Roman Catholic Church, which continued to represent about half of the population.

Only in the 19th century was a formal separation of church and state gradually implemented in the Netherlands and in many other European countries. The aforementioned 'liberal revolution' of 1848 can be seen as the watershed.

This nuanced and complicated picture of political reality was reflected in a variety of theological views, even within the Protestant tradition. The 19th century was the age of upcoming nationalism, and many defended the concept of the Netherlands as a 'Christian nation', with consequences for the role of the church and the role of the state. Not a few would continue to favor close cooperation between the government and especially the Netherlands Reformed Church as self-evident. Even after World War II the 'Christianization of national life according to Reformation views'[8] was part of the official church agenda. Others, like the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (the

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[7] Op. cit., par. 3.

[8] Cf. Kerkorde der Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk [*Church Order of the NRC*], 's Gravenhage/ Zoetermeer 1969 ff., art. VIII.

second largest Protestant denomination in the Netherlands), would rather keep a certain distance between the church and the state; for them, not the church but Christian organizations like political parties, newspapers, schools and universities (the Free University!) were called to play a role in public life – as actors in what in current terms is called 'civil society' (see below).

Christianity in Western Europe eventually has come to accept the separation of church and state and the democratic rule of law, however without limiting religion to private life. But even within this common scope a range of theological positions can still be distinguished. In this contribution, however, I have to limit myself to the way in which the Protestant Church in the Netherlands recently dealt with the issue.

3. Reports of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands

The Protestant Church in the Netherlands is the result of the merger of three churches, the Netherlands Reformed Church (NRC), the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (RCN), both already mentioned above, as well as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Kingdom of the Netherlands (ELC). The unification was implemented in 2004.

The general synod is the national governing body of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands. Its task includes the responsibility of giving guidance to the way members of the church might deal with current discussions in public debate. Within the context of this article three recent reports should be mentioned.

In April 2008, the synod adopted a report on *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in the Context of the Arab World of the Middle East*. In November 2009, the synod discussed and adopted a report on *The Church and the Democratic Constitutional State* (CDCS), in order to stimulate discussion in the church and its local congregations. Finally, in April 2011, the Islam memorandum *Integrity and Respect* was adopted.

Although from different perspectives, all three reports deal with issues regarding religion and the political, the most fundamental approach is to be found in *The Church and the Democratic Constitutional State*, which was written in order to stimulate discussion in the church and its local congregations. A discussion on such issues seemed useful for two reasons. On the one hand, there was a need for internal discussions on the value of traditional views as expressed in documents like the *Belgic Confession* (1561). On the other hand, cur-

rent challenges in society – including the rise of populist political parties, as well as public debate on the contents and limits of religious freedom in relation to other fundamental rights – triggered this discussion.

CDCS starts with an introductory chapter focusing on an interpretation of the concepts used: democracy, (social) constitutional state, and separation of church and state. These terms are interpreted according to the understanding presented in the opening paragraphs of this article. An important recent concept is added: 'civil society', which is understood as: "the atmosphere where citizens, without government interference, can shape society in freedom, and through numerous voluntary based organizations, in promoting interests or in sports, in the forming of public opinion or in volunteer work".[9] Civil society, as a relatively young phenomenon, is said to be of great interest for the vitality of the democratic constitutional state. One of the reasons for the church to deal with the issue of the democratic constitutional state is exactly the need to come to grips with its role in civil society.

The second chapter of CDCS deals with history, and more specifically with the way NRC, RCN and ELC respectively, have understood the responsibility of public authorities with regard to religion. Again, I have to refrain from an extensive exposition. Self-evidently, changing contexts have played an important role in the way such views have developed through the ages. Probably the most decisive era was the 4th century CE, when Christian religion became the public religion of the Roman Empire. This marks the beginning of the era of the *corpus christianum*, a societal order that continued to dominate until modern times and in which it is more or less self-evident that the Christian church and political authorities together represent the (spiritual and material) interests of the population. Shortly afterwards it is the church father Saint Augustine († 430) who founds a tradition of distinguishing different roles for church and state. In the long run, this distinction has proved to be pivotal, even though there have been times when throne and altar seemed to coincide and public authorities actively supported majority churches, sometimes with the effect of persecuting people with dissenting religious views. Augustine's way of thinking implies a positive appreciation of the role of public authorities, and at the same time a certain degree of independence needed for

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[9] *The Church and the Democratic Constitutional State* [= CDCS], par. 3, http://www.pkn.nl/Lists/PKN-Bibliotheek/The-church-and-the-democratic-constitutional-state.pdf, accessed Febr. 22, 2013.

the (official) churches in the respective countries. Nevertheless, this would prove to be a tense relationship. Emperors and kings and the like would often try to use the official church to promote their worldly interests; similarly the public churches would often try to defend their privileged positions by all available means, including the armed forces of state leadership. The Reformation caused deep divisions in the Christian community, but it did not change this overall pattern: the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* implies that in each territory it is the sovereign who decides on the religious affiliation of his people. As far as mainstream theology deals with such questions, it usually in fact legitimizes this principle. Until far into the 20th century, Reformed theocratic thinking – i.e. the view that governments have to organize life in society in compliance with Reformed principles exclusively – was not at all as marginal as it is nowadays.

It was, however, the upcoming Enlightenment – to be understood against the background of religious wars! – that challenged such positions, and that gradually forced churches to reconsider their theological views. The aforementioned separation of church and state in the 19th century is – at least partially – a fruit of the Enlightenment.

Major changes in theological thinking in this respect were caused by the experiences of the German church under national-socialist rule. The *Theological Declaration of Barmen* (1934) rejects any form of unconditional obedience to pubic authorities. Churches start to see themselves first of all as critical partners of the government, with a vocation to witness to biblical values whenever necessary.

In its third chapter CDCS deals with recent changes in the public domain. It points to the growing importance of the civil society as a part of the public domain, next to the market and the state. It also cautiously raises the question of whether we should not distinguish a third domain, separate from the private and the public domain, i.e. a 'sacred domain', as visible in, for instance, monuments and churches, and in national memorial days: "They refer in various ways to stories, common memories and values which determine society (and which therefore are constantly under discussion in politics and civil society!), but cannot be organized at the same time". The yearly Commemoration of the Dead on the 4th of May, reminding us of the victims of the Second World War, is an example. This 'sacred domain' is inevitably vulnerable.

This chapter also deals with recent trends in society, like individualization, globalization, pluriformity and European integration, and tries to clarify the impact of such developments on the democracy.

More than the aforementioned chapters, the fourth chapter of CDCS is relevant for the issue we deal with here. In charcoal it sketches the theological considerations that could guide the church in redefining its relation to state and society. Since I have had final responsibility in drafting this report, I may rightly be expected to agree with its line of argumentation.

Protestant heritage implies that the government is fundamentally seen as 'instituted by God' and a 'servant of God' (cf. Romans 13), although we are called to obey God rather than human beings (cf. Acts 5:29). In principle, the state – or rather the rule of law – is an instrument in the hand of God, but this does not mean that criticism of authorities and their actions would not be allowed. A massive identification of any specific political order with the will of God is impossible; rather should we say that we can 'recognize' God's merciful care in our democratic order. So, one could say that the terminology of 'recognition' implies a certain reservation: from a Christian perspective a democratic order can certainly be appreciated, but it does not at all preclude serious criticism as to the way a democracy functions or the results of a democratic process of decision making.

This also provides a basis for the responsibility of both the churches and other Christian organizations. Even the term 'theocracy' could be used in this respect: the church is convinced, indeed, that society will prosper if God's laws and promises are being taken seriously in legislation and government. However, because for many the term also suggests – incorrectly! – that the state should obey the church, it is better not to use this terminology in public debate. A basic theme in the Bible like 'the Kingdom of God' first and foremost wants to express the promise-character of the Word of God: in the end peace and righteousness are not the fruit of – and therefore completely dependant on – actions of people, but they reflect a divine promise with respect to the future.

A key question in this context regards the role of church and theology. Is it the calling of the church to provide a theological basis for the democratic constitutional state? Should it present arguments from its tradition to say 'this is how it should be'? History taught us the risks it brings when churches provide a theological legitimacy for a

certain political system. It soon results in the church blessing weapons, or legitimating unjust structures like the apartheid system.

The term 'recognize' is pivotal in this context. The church has learned to recognize in the democratic constitutional state something of God's merciful intentions, as expressed in the Gospel of God's kingdom. The word 'recognize' means to honor the value of the democratic constitutional state in full, but at the same time do justice to the fact that there always remains a great distance between the Christian tradition and today's world in the way they formulate their arguments.

The fourth chapter of CDCS addresses several aspects of this recognition. Without reserve the church recognizes important notions from Scripture in the constitutional state: the idea that the government is bound to 'justice and righteousness' is a motif that constantly returns in the prophetical books of the Old Testament. In this respect, an important anthropological motif is also the awareness of the sinfulness of humankind: unlimited and uncontrolled power often appeals more to the inclination of men to abuse it at the cost of others than to the responsibility to apply it to the benefit of society.

Even more strongly the term 'recognition' is applicable to the church's view of the social constitutional state: justice and righteousness are colored by solidarity, by a kingdom which 'will do justice to the afflicted of the people and save the children of the needy' (cf. Psalm 72:4). Justice is ultimately about human dignity, as a fundamental principle in the discussion on the foundation of human rights.

It is no coincidence that from an historical perspective the development of human rights as we know them started with the recognition of the freedom of religious conviction. It has often been stated that freedom of religion is incompatible with the truth-claim of Christian tradition: a history of bloodshed has been the result of this view. Today, however, the church recognizes an important biblical motif in religious freedom, i.e. the freedom of God's Spirit. Faith is a free gift of God, and that alone already rules out any form of religious coercion. A religious conviction concerns self-evidently a free choice, not enforceable by other people.[10] As a direct consequence the church also recognizes the legitimacy of plural society.

Subsequently, CDCS raises the question from which theological perspective the church can speak of human rights and human dignity. Here, a biblical concept of man, as an impulse for a Christian anthro-

[10] Cf. Dignitatis Humanae, par. 3.

pology, is presented, i.e., biblical talk of man as 'image of God' (cf. Genesis 1:26f., and 9:6). The secret of human dignity exists in three relations, to God, of people with each other, and of men to creation. In Jesus Christ, ultimately the "image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15), this man reaches his destination in full. To some extent, this view can be recognized in the secular concept of human dignity and human rights.

The separation of church and state, and, consequently, the neutrality of the 'secular' state is accepted, as far as it means the government as such does not have a religious preference; it should not imply that the state could choose a specific non-religious world view. After all, the government is impartial: it does not side with one religious or non-religious party against the other. As CDCS says:

> The Protestant Church in the Netherlands ... knows of the corrupting effect which the sharing of political power sometimes had on churches in history. It regards it undesirable to have more possibilities than others in society to let its convictions influence political life. Its strength can only lie in its conviction itself. In that sense the Scripture text "'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty" (Zechariah 4: 6) is guiding.[11]

A comparable position is being taken with respect to the concept of 'popular sovereignty' as a foundational condition of democracy. It is acceptable in its intention of rejecting the idea that worldly powers would rule over people without being accountable to the people involved. It should, however, not be understood as a denial of the significance of God's commandments and promises for society. The church fundamentally accepts the democratic constitutional state, and precisely therefore it maintains the right and the obligation of the church to speak critically of the actions of that government. It does so where necessary, according to its legitimate role in civil society. Chapter 4 of CDCS present an elaborate view of this role, but what has been said so far basically suffices to understand its position.

Given the stand taken in CDCS, there was no need for the synod to deal extensively with the same issues in the Islam memorandum *Integrity and Respect* (IAR). It may suffice to point to some references to these issues that implicitly show how CDCS should be read as its background.

The IAR report refers to the position of Christians in the Islamic world and to the Sharia as issues western Christians are concerned

[11] CDCS, par. 87.

about, as they are perceived by some as a threat to the democratic constitutional state. Is not the intention to conquer and to rule the world characteristic of the nature of Islam?[12]

However, the report recognizes that different views exist within Islam on the position of the state, on life as a minority among a non-Islamic majority, on the position of minorities such as Christians and Jews, and on the missionary character of Islam as well.[13]

Under the heading 'Islam and politics: theocracy' the report states: "The strong emphasis on Tawhid in Islam also implies the close relationship between faith and politics"[14] It will certainly be worthwhile to hear an Islamic response to this (quite generalizing) statement. The report continues:

> The Sharia contains God's will for life in its entirety and thus for society as well. The interweaving of religion and politics can be traced back to the role of Muhammad in the second part of his acting, in Medina. Therefore the Islamic state based on Sharia is the ideal for several mainstreams in Islam. In the Islamic community there is a debate going on about the consequences of this. This is caused by the fact that Sharia is not an unambiguous written book of law, but rather a collection of principles and regulations. What an Islamic state looks like is therefore dependent on the type of law school one subscribes to. It depends also on the question whether (re)interpretation of classic principles is possible today in a completely different culture. Some may point out that Islam is a political Islam by definition; others try to distinguish religion and politics more from each other.[15]

An important point of concern in this respect regards the impossibility for Muslims to abandon their religion:

> Although the Qur'an states that there should be no pressure with respect to religion (Al-Baqara, Sura 2:256), according to all Sunnah law-schools it is impossible to change from Islam to, for example, Christian faith. In general this calls for the death penalty. On this point there is a debate within the Islamic community on the possibility of re-interpretation of the rules in the modern setting.[16]

Further, the question is raised whether Islam is not inherently a threat to Western free democratic society. The report states:

> It is not a realistic expectation that the Netherlands will shortly be Islamic or that the country will be forced to live under Islamic authority. At present the

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[12] Cf. *Integrity and Respect*. Ch. 2.A.i.d.
[13] Cf. op. cit., Ch. 3.A.
[14] Op. cit. Ch. 3.B.iv.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Op. cit., Ch. 3.B.iv.

percentage of Muslims in the Netherlands is too small for that (about 5 – 6 %). Moreover, the majority of the Muslims support the Dutch rule of law and democracy. This majority experiences no problem in professing their faith within the present Dutch context. For most Dutch Muslims an Islamic state is not their primary concern, apart from the question what kind of state this should be.[17]

As to the existing fears in this respect among a great part of the native non-Islamic Dutch people, the report makes three points:

(1) Like Christianity, Islam is a 'missionary' religion. Islam strives for the ideal that every human being submits to God in the manner of Islam. Even if some Muslims in the Netherlands do not emphasize this very much, it is innate to classic Islam. (2) Within Islam there are movements that advocate peaceful means in this missionary objective. These peaceful means vary from inviting and convincing people to become Muslim till participation in the democratic process to reform society and, if possible, to rule. (3) Beside that the view occurs that conquering countries and people by force and violence is justified and even is called for.[18]

The report emphasizes that there is intensive discussion on this issue within Islam.

4. Some personal theological considerations

I have already made clear above that I fully endorse the position CDCS takes with regard to the relationship of religion and state. Therefore, let me conclude with some questions for further debate, as well as some suggestions for continued consideration.

Christian theological views regarding religion and state have considerably changed through history, and even today they can differ according to different contexts. In other words: Christian theology is contextual theology. The findings above suggest that the same would be true for Islamic theological views. That raises the question whether it is possible to identify some (common?!) guiding principles with regard to such contextual theological thinking.

From a slightly different perspective, the same question could be phrased in hermeneutical terms: is it possible for Christian and Muslim theologians (even in very different contexts) to identify more common ground as to the basic rules of the interpretation of sacred texts?

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[17] Op. cit., Ch. 3.C.i.
[18] Ibid.

I want to underline the issue of the role of religions in public debate. As I pointed to above, there is a tendency in our secular society to see religion as a completely private issue. From that perspective, religious views are supposed to be irrelevant in public debate. If so, this is supposed to be implied in the separation of church and state. I, however, fully endorse the view of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands that not only civil society as a matter of course has to leave room for religious convictions, but that society would, indeed, be seriously impoverished if such room would not be fully recognized and guaranteed. Religious traditions have a potential to enrich human life, notwithstanding the fact that they also have a potential to endanger society. It is up to religious communities to take responsibility – if possible joint responsibility! – in this respect.

German social ethicist Wolfgang Huber, speaks of the 'openness for foundation' (*Begründungsoffenheit*)[19] of human rights, and, therefore, of the democratic constitutional state as such. It implies that for its legitimacy democracy necessarily has to depend on the way secular and non-secular worldviews are able to give it theoretical plausibility within the faith framework of varying communities in plural society. CDCS presents the same conviction, where it says:

> Especially in a plural society there is no self-evident consensus on such a fundamental question as the one concerning the most profound meaning of human rights. Therefore there is not one – accepted by everyone, universally valid – philosophical, theological or religious starting point for human rights. Each religious or (non-religious) philosophic conviction can have a private view here, based among others on a private concept of man.[20]

In principle, all religions may be expected to consider the question if they can do so.

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[19] Cf. Wolfgang Huber, Review of F. Hafner, 'Kirchen im Kontext der Grund- und Menschenrechte', in: *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 119, 1994, 370-372, 371.

[20] CDCS, par. 82.

Islam and the State.
Renegotiating the Politics of Ummah and Theocracy

Yaser Ellethy

Since the 19th century, the emergence of an Islamic model of Renaissance characterized almost all the national and transnational reform projects in many Muslim countries. This model always presented itself as a guaranteed premise of prosperity and success. Nonetheless, any political involvement of Islam is rejected, not only by liberal and secular streams, but also by some modern Muslim scholars. Such an Islam-state relation creates fears about two main hypothetical consequences of the establishment of a so-called "Islamic state". The first fear concerns the transnationalization of Islam and the ambitions of some Muslim movements to revive the period of the Caliphate and unify the Muslim *ummah*, as a community of all believers under one political power. The second fear concerns the establishment of a theocratic state where no room is allowed for personal freedom, human rights and democratic apparatuses to guarantee the free choice of the people in the selection and evaluation of their political authorities.

In this article, we will question the credibility of an image of Islam that would imply a *de facto* concrete socio-political system based on textual sources and theological approaches. To understand the Islamic approach to modern state, democracy and secular political principles, we must first explore the fundamental theological and philosophical background of political thought in Islam. This will enable us to set the relation between Islam and the state in the context of a developing and evolving Islamic political thought, which is controlled by textual authority, but endeavors to respond to modern challenges. Therefore, I will begin by discussing the political involvement of Is-

lam and the Muslim conceptualization of the idea of state. Thereafter, I will deal with the hermeneutics of the term *ummah* and its national and transnational dimensions. Finally, I will examine the credibility of linking an Islamic political system with the concept of theocracy.

This paper aspires to contribute to the understanding of the relationship between religion and politics in Islam and the implications of this relationship in the shaping and institutionalization of the state.

1. The dilemma of Islam and politics

Throughout its long history, Islam has motivated and inspired individuals and groups with political ideas, and it continues to do so.[1] As I mentioned in the introduction, Islam turned its universal message into a geopolitical entity. The paradigm *par excellence* of the socio-political organization of a Muslim society was the Medina state under the leadership of the Prophet. After his death, the three decades of the Rightly-Guided Caliphate (632-661), as the name clearly indicates, also constituted a model of government in Islamic political thought. This period, especially at the end of the caliphate of Othman (644-456), witnessed great political troubles that reached the extent of schismatic upheavals and civil war. Nonetheless, all the negativity of the period remained less significant, traditionally, if compared with the noble and pious genius of the four great companions-Caliphs. Their excellence and uprightness, stated by the Qur'an and the Sunnah for all the *ṣaḥāba*,[2] granted the whole period an epic dimension. Furthermore, the period between the establishment of the Umayyad dynasty (661) and the fall of the last manifestation of an Islamic Caliphate, represented in the Ottoman Empire (1923), presented a wide array of political experiences. Throughout all these experiences – i.e. the diversity of political systems, state organization, and institutional structure building – Islam remained a common characteristic. During this long political path, Islam and its Sharia constituted the doctrinal incentive and the legislative impetus behind a civilizational project based on the geopolitical unity of one nation (*ummah*). If this was clearly the historical case, where, then, does the tension in the discourse on political and apolitical Islam arise? To answer this question

[1] Antony Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought*, Edinburgh 2010, xvi.

[2] In the Hadith methodology, the strict criterion of 'adāla (uprightness/probity) –as one of the principal characteristics necessary for the reliability of a narrator (*rāwi*) of a Prophetic tradition together with his/her precision (*ḍabṭ*) – does not apply for the *ṣaḥāba*. They are all considered *'udūl* (upright).

we need to look closely at the very nature of the relation between religion and politics in Islam. To support a political involvement of Islam is part of the Muslim conception of the holistic nature of the last divine guidance.[3] The "last", here, refers in the Islamic view to the "perfect" religion, which covers all affairs:

> This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion (Al-Mā'ida, 5.3); And We revealed the Book [Qur'an] to you as an exposition of all things, a guidance and mercy and good tidings for those who submit themselves [as Muslims] (Al-Naḥl, 16:89)

In his commentary on the first part of the last verse ("and We revealed the Book to you as an exposition of all things"), Ibn Kathir reports the interpretation of Ibn Mas'ūd who says that "He [God] has elucidated for us in this Qur'an everything and every knowledge". He refers to the interpretation of Mujahid as well, who says that it is about "everything permissible and impermissible (*ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*)". Ibn Kathir comments that the interpretation of Ibn Mas'ūd is more generic and comprehensive, because "The Qur'an includes every kind of useful knowledge of the past and that which is yet to come; every *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*; and all that the people need in their mundane affairs, their religion and the Hereafter".[4] The modern commentator Al-Shaarawi (d. 1998) interprets the "exposition of all things" also as everything humankind needs. He puts a rhetorical question that might be asked in reaction to this verse: "If someone says: if it is so, why do we ask the scholars ['*ulamā'*] to exert *ijtihād* in order to extract a certain ruling for us?" He replies to the question in a way that represents the Muslim conception of the comprehensive constitutional nature of the Qur'an, the integral role of the Sunnah in Islam and the process of *ijtihād*:

> We say: the Qur'an came as a miracle and a method of fundamentals (*manhaj fi al-uṣūl*). Allah the Almighty gave His Messenger (pbuh) the right to legislate: He says 'And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it. And whatsoever he forbids, abstain (from it)' [Al-Hashr, 7]. Thus the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh); his saying, deed or confirmation is underpinned by the Book. It explains and clarifies it. [...] The Prophet (pbuh) clarified this issue when he sent Mu'ādh Ibn Jabal as a judge for the people of Yemen and wanted to be ascertained concerning his judicial qualifications. He [the Prophet] asked him: 'what would you use to judge [among people]?' He [Mu'ādh] replied: 'by Allah's Book'. The Prophet asked him again: 'what if you don't find [a

[3] On the concept of the holistic nature of Islam (*shumūl al-Islam*) in the context of politics, cf. Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, *al-Dīn wa al-Siyāsa* (Religion and Politics), Dublin 2007, 53-62.

[4] Ibn Kathir, *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān al-Aẓīm*, Cairo 2003, vol. II, 725.

> relevant legal ruling in a Qur'anic text]?' He replied: 'then, according to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah' The Prophet said: 'What if you don't find [a ruling to deduce from the Sunnah]?' He replied: 'then I will use my independent judgment [*ajtahid ra'īyi*] and I won't spare any effort'. The Prophet (pbuh) said: 'All praise is for Allah who guided the messenger of the Messenger of Allah to that which pleases Allah and His Messenger'. Thus *ijtihād* is taken from God's Book. For every new issue we face, whereupon there is no text neither in the Qur'an nor in the Sunnah, we are permitted to practice *ijtihād*.[5]

Even if the scriptural background on politics in Islam is not so explicit, the Prophetic tradition, seen as the practical clarification of the Qur'an, is to be taken as a model. If we explore the Qur'anic revelation, we hardly find direct or explicit texts of political systematic ideology. However, the generic and maximal nature of some relevant Qur'anic verses has inspired many Muslim scholars with regard to the role of the last divine guidance in the organization of all mundane human affairs. No clear demarcation is made between the political and the social. Politics and state affairs in the Muslim conception, as in pre-modern Europe, were not conceived as a category separate from other activities but as an integral part of religion.[6]

Nevertheless, the historical moment is another significant factor in the emergence of a political aspect of Islam. Presently, this aspect is predominant in modern relevant debates within and outside the Muslim world. We do not even speak of a political aspect of Islam but of a "political Islam".[7] The salient aspects of contextualizing a certain interpretation of the divine revelation, including politicization, are mainly dependent on periods of relevant historical and transitional crises. This is almost general in theological hermeneutics, as the reflection on faith is not independent from the cultural and socio-economic circumstances.[8] Both the modern Islamic reformism and the emergence of an Islamic project of renaissance are reflections on a status quo of decay

[5] Muhammad Mutwalli Al-Shaarawi, *Tafsīr Al-Shaarawi*, Dar Akhbar Al-Youm, Cairo 1991, vol. 13, 8148f.

[6] Black, *The History*, 5.

[7] Cf. Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, *min Fiqh al-Dawla fi Al-Islam*, Cairo 2009, 88 ff., where he, on the one hand, refuses the label "political Islam" which makes it look like there are different "Islams", and, on the other, says that Islam cannot be but political, i.e. involved in politics.

[8] Cf. Muhammad Khalid Masud, The Doctrine of *Siyāsa* in Islamic Law, *Recht van de Islam*, n. 18, 2001, 4f.: "Significantly, the doctrine [*siyāsa*: politics] surfaced usually at the times of political crisis in Islamic history"; Henk Vroom, Understanding the Gospel contextually: Legitimate and Suspect?, in: Christine Lienemann-Perrin et al. (eds), *Contextuality in Reformed Europe: The Mission of the Church in the Transformation of European Culture*, Amsterdam and New York 2004, 35.

and corruption. The general political context presupposes a specific political contextualization of faith. This can be exemplified by the following Qur'anic verse:

> Say: Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds; No partner has He: this am I commanded, and I am the first of those who bow to His Will (Al-An'aām 6:162-163).

The verse is revealed in response to the pagans' devotion of sacrifices to idols and not to Allah, the One and Unique God. Hence, the Prophet is addressed to declare the uniqueness of God as the compass of all human actions, not only those of sacrifice. The classical exegetes like Al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, Al-Qurtubi and Ibn Atiyya do not show much concern for the implications of this verse in a particular political context.[9] Nevertheless, Qutb, in his exegesis, utilizes the verse in his theorization of the concept of God's sovereignty (*ḥākimiyya*) and the unique authority of his legislation, as a continuation in the context of the previous verses. He writes:[10]

> This *dīn* cannot mingle with other beliefs and conceptualizations, nor can its Sharia and system mingle with other doctrines, positions and theories. There can be no double description of any law, position or system, Islamic and something else! Islam is only Islam; Islamic Sharia is only Islamic Sharia. The Islamic social, political or economic system is only Islamic.[11]

To speak about an "Islamic social, political or economic system" makes it sound like a concrete religious textual code that determines different institutional details. This is, however, not necessarily the case. The Qur'an is a book of divine guidance for all of humanity, which surely includes the human status in its different aspects and contexts. Therefore, the establishment of some legislative norms, especially in economic and socio-political issues, was intended to cover the principal and generic rules without specifications. The sub-issues and the details of application of those principles are left to the human reasoning in the proper context, as long as this happens in conformity

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[9] Even among later and modern exegetes, like Al-Shawkani (d. 1834), Ibn Ashour (d. 1972), Al-Shaarawi, 1998 and others, the interpretation of the verse is more linked to the occasion of revelation and the principle of maximal devotion to God.

[10] Al-An'aām 6: 159f.: "As for those who divide their religion and break up into sects, thou hast no part in them in the least: their affair is with Allah: He will in the end tell them the truth of all that they did. He that doeth good shall have ten times as much to his credit: He that doeth evil shall only be recompensed according to his evil: no wrong shall be done unto (any of) them".

[11] Sayyid Qutb, *fī Ẓilāl Al-Qur'ān*, Cairo 2003, vol. III, 1239.

with the objectives of the general legislation. In this context, it can be expected that some Qur'anic verses would have generic connotations of their specific text to a general mundane issue. The exegetic rule concerning the Qur'anic science of *asbāb al-nuzūl* (the occasions/reasons of revelation) teaches that the text trespasses the specificity of the occasion with a view to the general objective. Generally, the aforementioned verse is used argumentatively, among other verses, in many of the Muslim modern debates on the relation between Islam and politics to illustrate the holistic nature of the *dīn* of Islam.

The term "religion" (*dīn*), as far as Islam is concerned, has always been and remains widely perceived by the majority of Muslims as something beyond the spiritual and ritual acts of devotion to God. That Islam is a belief and a way of living simultaneously, a *dīn* and a *dunia* (worldly life), rituals (*ibadāt*) and acts of dealing (*mu'amalāt*) are common prototypical syntheses either in the literatures of the Muslim intelligentsia, the daily religious debates, the Muslim media or in the discussions with many average Muslims. This is perhaps what gives the word "religion" a meaning that is difficult to be conceived in the context of secularism and modernity. M. Watt has noticed how the meaning of the term "religion" *dīn* in Islam and its world differs from the way many understand it in the modern Western world:

> For what does 'religion' now mean to the occidental? At best, for the ordinary man, it means a way of spending an hour or so on Sundays in practices which give him some support and strength in dealing with the problems of daily life, and which encourages him to be friendly towards other persons and to maintain the standards of sexual propriety; it has little or nothing to do with commerce or economics or politics or industrial relationships. At worst it fosters an attitude of complacency in the more prosperous individuals and breeds smugness. The European may even look at religion as an opiate developed by exploiters of the common people in order to keep them in subjection. How different from the connotations to the Muslim of the verse 3.19: 'he true religion with God is Islam'! The word translated as 'religion' is *dīn*, which in Arabic commonly refers to a whole way of life. It is not a private matter for individuals, touching only the periphery of their lives, but something which is both private and public, something which permeates the whole fabric of society in a way of which men are conscious. It is – all in one – theological dogma, forms of worship, political theory, and a detailed code of conduct, including even matters which the European would classify as hygiene or etiquette.[12]

[12] Montgomery Watt, *What is Islam*, New York and Washington 1968, 3.

Strikingly, Islam has developed and presented a different experience and political model in comparison to Judaism and Christianity. What makes the difference in the case of Islam is the idea of congruence between the spiritual and the political. A. Black put it as follows: "Muhammad's point was precisely that earlier theism, though humanitarian in principle, had failed to come to terms with the problem of power".[13] Similarly, K. Armstrong has underlined the fact that politics had never been central to early Christian religious experience, while it was no secondary issue for Muslims.[14] Islam had from its very earliest days a significant political involvement already by the establishment of the first Muslim state in Medina. The Prophet acted as a statesman, albeit never as a king or even a head of state, who was eager to unite this tribal community through a new, tight and unprecedented bond of social contract. The constitution of Medina substituted the clan system of the pre-Islamic era with a new citizen concept, which is considered a major step towards the constitutional state system.[15] What is known as the *Ṣaḥīfa* of Medina, with its detailed constitutive agreement, represents the detribalization of society and the emergence of a political system with a moral mission. This process achieved, rapidly, a significant transition into an organized Empire of Faith. Therefore, it can be clearly concluded that Islam has long been involved in the issue of power and government.

However, Islamic jurisprudential thought does not lack scholars who reject any involvement of Islam as a religion in the question of political authority and government. One year after the abolition of the Islamic Caliphate represented in the Ottoman Empire (on 3 March 1924), the Egyptian Azharite jurist Ali Abdulraziq issued his most controversial work on *Islam and the Fundamentals of Rule*.[16] He argues in his book that government in an Islamic state can be of any kind, even a dictatorship, a democracy, a socialist government or a Bolshevist one. According to Abdulraziq the Prophet was only God's Messenger with a purely "religious" call, and without any tendency to establish a state or seek authority; the leadership of the Prophet was

[13] Black, *The History*, 9f. He argues that "Judaism had preached an all-embracing [ethnic] law, while Christianity had preached spiritual [universal] brotherhood. But neither seriously addressed the problem of military power and political authority".

[14] Karen Armstrong, *Islam. A Short History*, New York 2002, 157.

[15] Cf. Yaser Ellethy, Gelijkheid en Verscheidenheid in een Islamitisch Perspectief, *Christen Democratische Verkenningen*, Summer 2011, 99.

[16] Ali Abdulraziq, *Al-Islam wa Uṣūl al-Ḥukm: Baḥth fi al-Khilāfa wa al-Ḥukūma fi Al-Islam*, Cairo 1925.

necessary for the accomplishment of his message and had nothing to do with government. Upon its publication, the views in this book generated much opposition and criticism in the academic and religious circles inside and outside Egypt.[17] The commotion eventually led to the dismissal of the sheikh and jurist from his posts by the unanimous decision of the High Corps of Scholars (*'ulamā'*) and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar on 12 August 1925. The list of condemnations addressed to him by the same Corps included seven accusations. The most important were: making the Islamic Sharia a mere spiritual legislation irrelevant to rule issues; claiming that the political system in the Prophetic period was obscure and equivocal; and that the main mission of the Prophet was the dissemination of God's law devoid of rule; denial of the consensus of the *ṣaḥāba* that a political leader should be assigned to ordain the religious and mundane affairs of the *ummah*; and claiming that the government of the first Caliph Abu Bakr and his followers was non-religious.[18] The outcome of the critiques against Abdulraziq's book can be summarized in the fact that Islam produced through the Qur'an and the Sunnah general rules for the political system that portray the main characteristics of a Muslim state. Those rules might be characterized as general or broad, but they still can form a certain Islamic political ideology.

Moreover, mottos like "Islamization of politics" or "politicization of Islam", "religious state" (*dawla dinīyya*), or exploitation of religion to rise to power, still prevail in the rejection of any form of a *political* Islam within countries with Muslim majorities. In the aftermath of the so-called Arab Spring in countries like Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, the emergence of Muslim movements and political parties to power has been a common denominator. Nonetheless, on the level of debates within the public domain, secular and liberal streams[19] are

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[17] For the relevant literature cf. Selim Al-Awwa, *fi al-Niẓam al-Siyāsi li al-Dawla al-Islamiyya*, Cairo 2006, 113 ff.

[18] Cf. Muhammad Imara, *Al-Islam wa Uṣūl al-Ḥukm li Ali Abdulraziq: Dirāsa wa Wathā'iq*, Beirut 2000, 21f. Later on, according to Imara, Abdulraziq reviewed his opinions and refused the republication of his book. Id., *Naqd Kitāb Al-Islam wa Uṣūl al-Ḥukm li Sheikh Al-Islam Muhammad Al-Khidr Hussein*, Cairo 1998, 5f.; cf. id., *Fikr al-Tanwīr bayna al-'Almāniyyīn wa al-Islāmiyyīn*, Cairo 1993, 40-44, where he claims, according to contemporary witnesses, that Abdulraziq confessed that not he was behind the views in the book but the Egyptian intellectual Taha Hussein. This is hard to believe especially when the sheikh himself should have used such allegation during his trial.

[19] In fact, speaking about secular, modernist and liberal streams in the Muslim world is, in its major part, a bit different from how the West identifies such concepts. For example, many of the Muslim liberal and secular trends can hardly reject room for the 'principles' of Islamic

struggling to prove that religion (Islam) cannot offer a system of government today simply because of the lack of a unified Islamic political model, not to mention the diversity and controversies between the different Islamic parties. According to this perspective, the involvement of religion in politics had produced catastrophic consequences in the history of Islamic political development, even during the Rightly-Guided Caliphate; Islam as a pure and divine faith should remain distant from the manipulative and unmoral realm of politics. However, even Muslim "modernizing elite" continue to regard Islam as an important and a fundamental part of their identity.[20]

To make a point out of the two main streams concerning the political involvements of Islam, one can conclude that it is far beyond historical truth that the Prophet separated religion and the political organization of the Muslim state.[21] Similarly, the very notion of *khilāfa* was a *succession* of the Prophet in safeguarding religious and mundane affairs of the Muslim *ummah*. Historically, Islam, embodied in the person of the Prophet, presented the legislative, ethical and constitutional fundamentals that permeated the whole structure of all the Caliphate-oriented state experiences. This happened consciously, and it embodied an Islamic ideal which does not separate the religious and the human, the Hereafter and the here and now, the spiritual and the mundane, or, more specifically, between the private and the public. The separation between religion and state in Muslim political history took the form of the independence of the *'ulamā'*, the development of the different law schools and religious groups without governmental control. In Islam, religious and political life developed distinct spheres of experience with independent leaders and organizations.[22] The Islamic political thought was never concerned about a "political" Islam

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Sharia in the post-totalitarian new constitution in Egypt. This can be attributed, mainly, to the significant role Islam plays in the public domain, and its central position in the collective culture, something which imposes a certain "political attitude" in the communication with public opinion. Thus, the polarization on the side of the secular streams tends to define itself in terms of antagonism with "Islamists", as opportunists in the name of religion, and not with "Islam".

[20] Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change*, Princeton 2002, 88. He argues: "That relations between the 'ulama and the modernizing elite [...] have typically remained tense is not for any lack of the latter's professions of commitment to Islam. [...] Indeed, they have sometimes outdone each other in acknowledging the principle that Islam ought to play a prominent role in public life".

[21] Cf. Al-Qaradawi, *min Fiqh al-Dawla*, 16.

[22] Ira Lapidus, *The Separation of State and Religion in the Development of Early Islamic Society*, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 6, n. 4, October 1975, 364; cf. also Al-Awwa, *fi Al- Al-Nizām*, op. cit., 121.

but rather about "political views" in Islam. The difference is to be considered great once we realize that the former formula attributes politics more to Sharia while the latter makes it a mere chapter in the Islamic *fiqh* of state. This, consequently, means that it remains an issue of *ijtihād*, an issue of speculative texts. Moreover, this implies that more room is to be given to the objectives of Sharia (*maqāṣid*), in conformity with both the changing spatio-temporal context and the generic rules. Here, there should also be space for core democratic values, simply because there is no particular political system of rule in Islam, but a rigorous system for the ethics of governance and statecraft according to Islam.

2. The ummah

One of the most predominant terms in the political discourse on Islam and state is the term *ummah*. Its religious and political connotations are especially connected to transnational prospects in the Islamic view of state. Historically, the notion of *ummah* remained a normative experience in Islamic political thought. It constituted, and still constitutes, the reference point in the Islamic discourse on reformism and revivalism. On the one hand, this can be attributed to the fact that the term is rooted in the scriptural sources. On the other hand, it has developed into a geopolitical description of the Muslim state as early as its beginning in Medina under the leadership of the Prophet. Thus, both the religious and the political dimensions of the term *ummah* developed side by side. Nevertheless, we can distinguish semantic and technical differences in the usage of the term. This is important in the discussion of the relation between Islam and politics, the concept of state and the issue of transnationalization in Islam.

It is true that the *ummah* began as a persecuted minority in the 7th century city of Mecca, and developed into a state in Medina,[23] but was it restricted to a certain religious and sociopolitical group? The Islamic notion of *ummah* is beyond the narrow concept of a "religious community of Muslims". The term, as is the case with every other Islamic term, cannot be religiously understood away from its linguistic implications established in the text of the Qur'an. The word *ummah* is one of the Qur'anic identical words that have various meanings (*mushta-*

[23] John Esposito and John Voll, *Islam and Democracy*, New York and Oxford 1996, 40.

rak lafẓi)[24] The word *ummah* is mentioned in the Qur'an with different meanings. It may refer to: a group or a league of people, like the folk of Abraham and Ismail and their offspring (Al-Baqara, 2:128,134); a group from the People of the Book (Āl Imrān, 3:113; Al-A'rāf, 7:159); religion/Islam or a denomination (*milla*) (Al-Anbiyā', 21:92; Al-Zukhruf, 43:33); a long period of time or years (Yusuf, 12:45; Hūd, 11:8); a nation/former nation (Yunus, 10:47; Al-Mu'minoun, 23:43; Fāṭir, 34:24); one single person, meaning *Imam*, exemplar or leader, as in the case of Abraham, the "Father of the Prophets" (Al-Naḥl, 16:120); a genus or species of creation (Al-An'aām, 6:38); finally, it refers to the nation of Islam in particular (Al-Baqara, 2:143; Āl-Imrān, 3:110).[25]

Furthermore, the concept of *ummah* is defined in the text of the *Saḥīfa* of Medina without any exclusiveness to the Muslims. We read there that the Jews of Banu Awf, the other Jewish clans of Medina and all those who participated in the new constitutional agreement, comprise, together with the Muslims, one *ummah.*[26] Even when this exclusiveness is granted to Muslims by the Qur'an as the best *ummah* in comparison to other nations, this primacy is predicated on and identified by enjoining good and forbidding evil:

> You are the best nation [*ummah*], evolved for mankind, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah (Āl 'Imrān, 3:110).[27]

The *ummah*, in religious terms, can denote a "society *of* the Muslim believers", but politically, was never meant to denote a "community *for* the Muslim believers". The early Muslim implementations of the idea of *ummah*, as a continuity of the Muslim state in Medina, have largely expanded and fundamentally developed since the three-decade period of the Rightly-Guided Caliphate (632-661). Beginning with the Umayyad and the Abbasid dynasties (661-1258) and reaching the Ottoman Empire (1299-1923), the religious aspect of *ummah*, with few

[24] Cf. Al-Zarkashi, *al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm Al-Qur'ān*, Beirut 2005, vol. I, 134. He uses the word *ummah* as an example in his introduction to the Quranic science of *al-wujūh wa al-naẓā'ir* (identical words with different meanings).

[25] Al-Damaghani, *al-Wujūh wa al-Naẓā'ir*, Beirut 2003, 42-44; cf. Ibn Al-Jawzi, *Nozhat al-A'yun al-Nawāẓir fī 'Ilm al-Wujūh wa al-Naẓā'ir*, Beirut 1984, 142-144; Al-Askari, *al-Wujūh wa al-Naẓā'ir*, Cairo 2007, 31-37.

[26] Ibn Hisham, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, Beirut 1990, vol. II, 144f.; *Muhammad Hamidullah, Majmū'at al-Wathā'iq al-Siyāsiyya li al-'Ahd al-Nabawi wa al-Khilāfa al-Rāshida*, Beirut 2009, 59-62 (esp. n. 25); Alfred Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad. A Translation of Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah*, Part III, Oxford 1955, 231f.

[27] Cf. Ellethy, Gelijkheid, 99.

exceptions, witnessed a significant shift toward a more political practice of a monarchical state.[28] The geopolitical entity of this Muslim nation remained the utmost goal without any referential role of this *ummah* in the choice of its political authority. Reaching the postcolonial era, the concept nation-state emerged among the Muslim countries. Nationalism prevailed and the emerging nation-states, in the patronage of the capitalist or the socialist bloc, developed more motives of political fragmentation. The notion of *ummah* (community of believers) maintained its religious dimension as part of the "Muslimness" which unites a virtual Muslim world scattered in geopolitical *ummahs* (nations).

Nonetheless, some justification for the transnational political reference of the term to the concept of the Muslim state could still be found in the writings of modern prominent Muslim scholars like Qutb. He argues that the revelation of the Qur'an was intended to build an *ummah* that involves one state, where the scattered portions are gathered and pulled all together to one source and authority. His argument is that "this is the true religion, as it is for God, as the Muslims knew it, when they were 'Muslim'!"[29] What Qutb tries to elaborate here in detail is a commonly established notion that negates any separation between religion and state in Islam. Through their long history, Muslims never knew a distinction between religion and state until the rise of secularism. A Prophetic tradition, though in a weak narration, warns about the separation between religion (Islam) and state. It reads as follows:

> The wheels of Islam are rotating, so keep in rotating with Islam. Verily, Islam and authority (state) will separate, so do not abandon the Book. Verily, you will be ruled by rulers who will judge to themselves what they do not judge to you. If you disobey them, you will be killed, and if you obey them, you will be in delusion. They said: 'What should we do then, Messenger of God?' He said: 'Act as the companions of Jesus, the son of Mary, they were crucified and sawn. Death in the obedience of God is better than living in the disobedience of God.'[30]

In fact, this was the reflection of Qutb on the sociopolitical status in Egypt in the middle of the 20th century, for which he was executed by a socialist regime. His usage of the term *ummah* is heavily charged by

[28] Cf. Lapidus, *The Separation*, 366 ff.
[29] Qutb, fī Ẓilāl, vol. II, 825.
[30] Cf. Al-Qaradawi, *min Fiqh al-Dawla*, 17, n. 2. He cites the hadith with its *tahkrij* (attribution to sources of narration) and discusses its authenticity.

a deep nostalgia to an Islamic transnational model and a "moral" political experience that should achieve the expected reform. This is a classical orientation almost in all Islamic revivalist approaches in times of severe sociopolitical crises and civilizational decline. The *ummah* political model represents the Muslim aspiration to an era of power, justice and prosperity, more than hegemonic ambitions. This is probably the reason why it is always linked to the notion of the Caliphate.

To conclude, how is this *ummah*-state to be represented today by those scattered and sporadic Muslim ethnic-states within a globalized world of national ethnocentric sub-entities? The answer to this question is relevant to the history of Islamic political thought, which always tried to base its theorization on the scriptural sources of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. With a variety of practical applications, which all perceived it as a sociopolitical entity, or the "Abode of Islam", the *ummah* reached its present interpretation which tends to trespass geopolitical barricades and nationalistic failures by a spiritual and universal bond between all Muslims.[31] This was again originally founded on the Qur'anic usage, which denies any spatio-temporal limit to the concept of *ummah* as it is identical to Islam ("Verily, this *ummah* [religion] of yours is a single *ummah*, and I am your Lord: therefore worship Me").[32] Accordingly, it is a brotherhood in faith, which unifies all Muslims no matter where or when. Muslims, from this perspective, are one *ummah* even if they do not comprise one state. This bond of brotherhood in Islam is literally incarnated in the following authentic Prophetic tradition:

> The parable of the Muslims in their mutual kindness, compassion and sympathy is as one human body. If one of its limbs suffers, the whole body responds with wakefulness and fever.[33]

3. Theocracy

To claim that an "Islamic governance" (*ḥukm islāmi*), an elusive term in my view, is a sort of governance in the name of God or a revival of a theocratic form of rule, is both untrue and non-Islamic. This is not only because of scriptural restrictions or jurisprudential reasons, but

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[31] In many Muslim debates the discourse on a transnational union of the Muslim or Arab World is inspired by the modern European experience; that is maintenance of national independence and formation of an intra-Islamic/Arabic confederation.

[32] Al-Anbiyā', 21:92.

[33] Moslim, *Ṣaḥīh Moslim*, Beirut 2007, Kitab al-Adab, hadith 2586; Al-Bukhari, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhari*, Beirut 2007, Kitab al-Adab, hadith 6011.

also because of historical facts. Islam neither knew nor prompted its adherents to establish a theocratic rule. No single Muslim can claim rule or authority on behalf of God or as a representative ruler of God on Earth.[34] The concept of vicegerency (*istikhlāf*) on Earth is general for those who believe and do good as a community. The Divine promise concerns "succession" of the unrighteous by the righteous:

> Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will surely make them to succeed (the present rulers) in the Earth even as He caused those who were before them to succeed (others), and that He will most certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, and that He will most certainly, after their fear, give them security in exchange; they shall serve Me, not associating aught with Me; and whoever is ungrateful after this, these it is who are the transgressors (Al-Nour, 24:55).[35]

When the Qur'an refers to the human authority to which a Muslim should show obedience, after God and His Messenger, it uses the plural of "those who are in charge" (*uli al-amr*):

> O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you (*Al-Nisa'a*, 4:59).

The Qur'anic commentaries differ concerning this category of people who have a certain authority and should be obeyed. The narrations vary whether they were those in charge of military missions (*umarā' al-sarāya*); the people grounded in knowledge (in general), and *fiqh* (*ahl al-'ilm wa al-fiqh/al-dīn*); the companions (*ṣaḥāba*; especially Abu Bakr and Omar); or the governors (*al-a'imma wa al-wūlā*). Al-Tabari prefers the last interpretation, because it is affirmed by the Sunnah concerning the obedience of those in authority "in all that implies obedience [of God] and interest (*maṣlaḥa*) for the Muslims". He narrates the following Prophetic saying:[36]

> After my death some [other] people will be entrusted with authority upon you. The righteous will be in charge upon you with his righteousness, and the

[34] The Shiite system of *wilāyat al-faqīh* (governance/guardianship of the jurist) and its independence on the concept of the *imāma* (imamate), ascribed to Ayatollah Khomeini, remains a Shiite-Iranian form of reasoning.

[35] Cf., for example, Al-Baqara, 2:30: "Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth" ; Al-An'aām 6:165: "It is He Who has made you inheritors of the earth".

[36] He begins with another authentic hadith in the context of his interpretation of the obedience of the Prophet: "Whoever obeys me has indeed obeyed Allah, and whoever obeys my appointed commander (*amīri*) has indeed obeyed me. Whoever disobeys me has indeed disobeyed Allah, and whoever disobeys my appointed commander (*amīri*) has indeed disobeyed me"; cf. Al-Bukhari, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Kitab al-Jihād, hadith 2957; Moslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Kitab al-Imāra, hadith 1835.

> unrighteous with his unrighteousness. Obey them in all that is in accordance with the right, and pray behind them. If they do right, it [the reward] will be for them and for you, if they do wrong it will be for you and against them.[37]

The hadith restricts the obedience clearly to "all that is in accordance with the right" (*koll ma wāfaq al-haq*), regardless of whether those in authority are righteous or not. The hadith addresses the people and not the rulers. Al-Tabari supports his argument saying:

> if it is known that obedience is obligatory for nobody except Allah, His Messenger and a just ruler (*imām 'ādil*) [...] it is then concluded that those who Allah the Almighty designates to be obeyed among humans are those in charge, the rulers of the Muslims, [...] whom Allah ordered His servants to obey them in that which they order, being something for the good of all the people [...] and everything that does not imply disobedience of God.[38]

Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani (d. 1448) reports that one of the *tabi'īn* was asked by some of the leaders of the Umayyads:

> Has God not ordered you to obey us by saying 'and those charged with authority among you?' He replied: "Is it not taken away from you – obedience – if you violate the right by His saying 'If you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger?'"[39]

Thus, it is clear that: a) those in charge are distinguished from the religious scholars and the jurists *'ulamā'/fuqahā'*, b) obedience, on the people's side, is conditioned by the justice of the ruler, c) the subject of obedience is for the common good of the people, and does not imply any disobedience of God. In this regard, those who are to be entrusted with political authority should have the qualifications allowing them to bear this responsibility. Having the title *faqīh, 'ālim* or a *mufti* is not adequate if the relevant political expertise is missing. Islam recognizes the importance of specialization. Moreover, this involves two important things as far as the *'ulamā'* are concerned in the context of a

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[37] Al-Tabari cites this hadith as *ṣaḥīḥ*. Cf. Al-Haythami, *Majma' al-Zawā'id wa Manba' al-Fawā'id*. Beirut 2001, vol. V, Kitab al-Khilāfa, hadith 9105, 282, who criticizes one of the narrators as *da'īf jiddan* (very weak).

[38] Al-Tabari, *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āyy Al-Qur'ān*, Cairo 2008, vol. III, 2389-2393; cf. Al-Qurtubi, *al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām Al-Qur'ān*, Beirut 2006, vol. VI, 428 ff. Ibn Kathir, in his *Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān al-Aẓīm*, vol. I, 638, tends to include the *ulamā'a* and those in charge under the category of *uli al-amr*. In this case as well, their authority is not absolute, and their obedience should not imply disobedience to God. The guardianship of the *ulamā'a* in religious issues remains subject to the recognition of the common Muslims who have the right to criticize, review, compare and disregard their opinions, cf. Zaman, *The Ulama*, 10.

[39] Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, *Fatḥ Al-Bāri bi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhari*, Amman 2000, vol. III, Kitab al-Aḥkām, 3194.

modern state. Firstly, according to Al-Awwa,[40] they should not be excluded from political positions for which they can have the qualifications, even in non-religious fields. Secondly, an Islamic scholar, even if he were the greatest of his age, is not eligible to be involved in politics unless he has the required knowledge and expertise.

> In fact, the Islamic tradition promoted the idea of the distance between the *ulamā'* and the rulers as established on some Prophetic hadiths. Al-Suyuti (d. 1505) wrote a relevant treatise on *The Dispraise of Coming to Those in Charge and the Rulers.*[41] He compiles in this work a plethora of Prophetic traditions related to this idea. Indicatively, some narrations report that "whoever comes to the doors of the rulers would be tempted"; "the more the servant is closer to the ruler the more he is distant from Allah"; "there will be [some] rulers after me. Whoever visits them and believes their lies and supports them in their injustice, does not belong to me nor do I belong to him, and he will not approach the Cistern (*Ḥawḍ*). And whoever does not visit them nor believe their lies nor support them in their injustice, (he) belongs then to me and I belong to him and he will approach the Cistern". The reason, as Al-Manawi (d. 1621) explains, is the fear that the *'ālim* may become corrupt and hypocrite, under the influence of the political authority.[42]

Looking at the Sunnah, we find that the Prophet himself was reluctant to receive any expression of authoritarian reverence usually given to the kings and Caesars of his era. A hadith reports that when a man was trembling and stuttering before him feeling the solemnity toward the person of God's Messenger, he addressed him saying:

> Be at ease! I am not a king. I am but the son of a woman of Quraish who used to eat the meat dried in the sun.[43]

He was also eager to advise his commanders (*umarā'*) to be careful that when they lay siege to a fort, and its people ask for God's judgment/rule (*ḥukm Allāh*), to clarify that they use their own judgment, as *ijtihād*, because they would be uncertain whether this will meet God's judgment.[44] The separation between the realm of human *ḥukm* and that of the Divine *ḥukm* is clear. Following the Prophetic period, Is-

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[40] Al-Awwa, *fi Al-Niẓām*, 121.

[41] Al-Suyuti, *ma Rawāh al-Asāṭīn fi Dhamm al-Majī' ila al-Umarā' wa al-Salāṭīn*, Tanta 1991. He dedicates a chapter (89 ff.) to reports on how the first generation of the *ṣaḥāba* and the *tabi'īn* used to avoid public offices especially in judiciary (*qaḍā'*) out of piety and fear of the huge responsibility before God.

[42] Al-Manawi, *Fayḍ al-Qadīr Sharḥ al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaghīr*, Beirut 1972, vol. III, 121; Al-Suyuti, *ma Rawāh*, 7.

[43] Al-Albani, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi' al-Saghīr*, Beirut 1988, vol. II, hadith 7052, 1185.

[44] Moslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Kitab al-Jihād, hadith 1731. Cf. also the explanation in Al-Nawawi, *al-Minhāj fi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Moslim Ibn Al-Hajjāj*, Amman 2000, 1116.

lamic terms like *khilāfa* (succession/vicegerency), *imāma* (leadership, imamate),[45] *ri'aāsa 'āmma* (public leadership) are all identical words that came to be for the notion of the higher political authority entrusted to a Muslim ruler. Al-Mawardi (d. 1058) defines it as "succession of prophethood in the guardianship of religion and management of the worldly affairs".[46] Furthermore, none of the first four orthodox Caliphs of Islam, with their period seen as the exemplary Rightly-Guided Caliphate, claimed infallibility with regard to his political authority, or claimed that he represents God on earth. In fact this has never happened in the early history of Islamic political thought. They were just the successors of the Prophet who took on the authority to deal with the issues of the *ummah*. That is why the first Caliph, Abu Bakr (632-634), replied to those who called him '*khalifatu*' *lla*' (Allah's agent/inheritor on Earth) by saying: "I am not the *khalifa* of Allah, but the *khalifa* [successor] of Allah's Messenger"[47] He also began his authorization to be in charge of the Muslim community with the following words: "I have been entrusted with authority over you, while I am not the best among you. If I do good, support me. If I do wrong, correct me".[48] The Caliphs, especially Abu Bakr and Omar, were eager to start their messages by a formula which emphasizes that what follows implies their own views, lest it would be understood that they attribute it to God.[49]

If we claim that Islam denies and opposes every form of theocracy, the concept of *ḥākimiyya*, 'sovereignty of God', can hardly escape our notice in this respect. The concept is sometimes believed, by scholars like Qutb and Ai-Maududi, to have arisen in modern times, although the origin of the religious slogan that grants validity to this concept can be traced back to early Islamic history. The story goes back to the events of what was called *al-Fitna al-Kubra* (the Great Upheaval), which brought the Caliphate system to an end and commenced a new era of dynastic rule in Islam. When the Kharijites (*khāwarij*) refused the authority of human arbitration between the

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[45] The term *imamate* is more linked to the Shiite political literature and bestows more "holy" characteristics on the person of the Imam according to his genealogy as a member of the Prophetic household and to the concept of '*isma* (infallibility, sinlessness).

[46] Al-Mawardi, *al-Aḥkām al-Sultāniyya*, Cairo 2006, 15. He defines the term *imāma*, which is, in the Sunni conception, a synonym of the *khilāfa*; cf. the editor's (A. Jad) note, footnote 1.

[47] Op. cit., 39.

[48] Ibn Hisham, *al-Sīra*, vol. IV, 312.

[49] Taha Jabir Al-Ilwani, Taṣdīr: Ḥākimiyya Ilahiyya am Ḥākimiyyat Kitāb? in: Hisham Jaafar, *al-Ab'aād al-Siyāsiyya li Mafhūm al-Ḥākimiyya*, Herndon-Virginia 1995, 32.

fourth Caliph Ali Ibn Abi Talib (656-661) and his rebel governor in Syria, Mu'awiya,[50] they claimed that "sovereignty belongs only to God" (*in 'il- ḥukmu illa li' Llāh*).[51] The response of the Caliph Ali was that "This is a word of justice which seeks injustice". However, even if we ascribe the emergence of the term *ḥākimiyya* to the Khawarij, it was not meant to refuse human authority in mundane affairs. It was rather a refusal of the outcome of the arbitration by Amr Ibn Al-Aās and Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari.[52]

Moreover, the word '*ḥukm*', usually translated as 'rule', including its derivatives, has divergent meanings in the Qur'an; like permissibility and impermissibility in issues related to worship and religion (Al-Nisā', 4:60-65; Al-Mā'ida 5:1; Yusuf, 12:40; Al-Kahf, 18:26, Al-Shūra, 42:10); fate and acts of God (Yusuf, 12:67; Al-Ra'ad, 13:41); prophethood and the Prophets' Sunnah (Al-Anbiyā', 21:74; Al-Qaṣaṣ, 28:14; Al-Aḥzāb, 33:34); the Qur'an and its interpretation (Al-Baqara 2:269; Al-Naḥl, 16:125); deep understanding and knowledge (Al-Shu'arā', 26:83; Mariam 19:12; Al-An'aām, 6:89); judicature, adjudication in disputes and conflicts among people (Al-Zumar, 39:3; Al-Ḥaj, 22:56; Al-Baqara 2:113); appointment of a prophet in rule (*Ṣād*, 38: 26), perfection and protection against perversion (Hud, 8:1; Al-Ḥaj, 22:52); clarity and intelligibility (Āl 'Imrān, 3:7); and finally *ḥukm* in the political meaning of governance (Al-Nisā' 4:58). Within the framework of these meanings the notion of *ḥākimiyya* in the Qur'an can be classified into two main categories. The first is the 'formative' (*takwīniyya*), which represents God's will and acts in His creation, as all that exists in this universe is subject to His sovereignty. The second is the 'legislative' (*tashri'īyya*), related to belief, religious acts of devotion, ethics and principles of mundane affairs. Thus, the aim of *ḥākimiyya* becomes double: to adjudicate between people in their mundane and eternal life, and to protect against perversion and guarantee the interest of humans in this life and the Hereafter.[53]

Finally, that the notion of *ḥākimiyya* inspired some Muslim schools, like Al-Maududi and Qutb, is true. However, this has always

[50] Cf. Al-Awwa, *fi al-Niẓām*, 100f.

[51] Cf. the whole context, for example, in Al-An'aām, 6:57: "Say: 'For me, I (work) on a clear sign from my Lord, but ye reject Him. What ye would see hastened, is not in my power. The judgment rests with none but Allah: He declares the truth, and He is the best of judges'".

[52] Hisham Jaafar, *al-Ab'aād al-Siyāsiyya li Mafhūm al-Ḥākimiyya* Herndon-Virginia 1995, 79.

[53] Op. cit., 57 ff. Cf. Abu Al-A'la Al-Maududi, *Naẓariyyat Al-Islam al-Siyāsiyya*, Damascus 1967, 27f.

remained a mere political thought and a human reasoning *ijtihad*. In other words, it does not represent a clear scriptural Islamic political rule of Sharia, but rather a certain 'political thought' and jurisprudence (*fiqh siyāsi*).[54] Additionally, even the extremist Muslim political theorists acted in deep awareness of the difference from the authority of religious dignitaries in the medieval European experience.[55] Islamic scriptural sources, the Qur'an and the Sunnah, do not prescribe a certain and concrete model of rule, economy, or judicature that can thus be called "the Islamic" rule, economy, or judicature. Islam rather presents a general philosophy for these human developing notions, leaving the specific technicalities and mechanisms of application to the different spatio-temporal contexts. God's sovereignty does not mean that a certain Muslim authority rules in God's name. In Islam, as in a democracy, the *ummah* is the source of political authority, but the borders of this authority are the established conclusive and explicit religious texts that meet the unbroken consensus *ijmā'*.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that religion remains a point of reference in the Islamic concept of state. This simply means that when speaking about human rights, God's rights should be seriously taken into consideration. Another important point here is that Islam did not know a particular form of government. All forms of government in the long Islamic history are the fruit of human reasoning (*ijtihād*), under the guidance of the general and total rules encountered in the texts of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. In Islam, we cannot speak about an "Islamic government" but rather about an "Islamic philosophy of governance". In other words, a statecraft which can realize and incorporate the objectives of Islamic legislation can be called, at least politically, "Islamic".

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[54] Muhammad Imara, *Maqalāt al-Ghuluw al-Dīni wa al-Ladīni* (Essays of Religious and non-Religious Extremism), Cairo 2004, 31f.

[55] Cf. Al-Maududi, *Naẓariyyat*, 30-33. He calls his concept of Islamic political system of state "theocratic", but differentiates it from what he calls a 'medieval European theocracy'.

Gender

Introduction

Nelly van Doorn-Harder

In this section on gender, four women and two men reflect on the agency and role of women in interreligious and intercultural dialogue. Four, Nancy Souisa, Ema Marhumah, Elga Sarapung, and Fredrik Doeka are Indonesian; Tijani Boulaouali is Dutch-Moroccan while I myself originate from the Netherlands.

Each of the writers represents a vastly different background, even within Indonesia where Nancy Souisa's experience with episodes of extreme violence in the Moluccan islands is neither shared by Ema Marhumah and Elga Sarapung as they both live on the island of Java in Yogyakarta, nor by Fredrik Doeka who resides in East Nusa Tenggara, also known as West Timor. Tijani Boulaouali is a Dutch-Moroccan journalist and philosopher while I myself am Dutch-American. As our contributions will show we all present very different positions in the spectrum of ideas about women's role and agency in dialogue.

We started this section in Indonesia by meeting twice with the authors who reside there; the first time was in January 2012 with a follow up meeting in July of that same year.[1] Our desire to meet was based on the fact that we all were aware of the topic but up to then few of us had studied it in depth. Thus to educate ourselves our discussions provided opportunities to survey the various ideas, theories and publications available about the topic. Kemerlien Ondang who teaches at the Christian University in Tomohon, North Sulawesi and Juberlian Padele who was writing her dissertation in Salatiga were part of these

[1] I would like to express my gratitude to Corrie van de Ven of the PKN in Utrecht whose generous fund made these meetings possible.

discussions. They had been active in various peacemaking forums in Sulawesi, an area that after the fall of Suharto in 1998 had been plagued by intermittent outbreaks of sectarian violence. Violent incidents occurred in particuiar around the city of Poso in Central Sulawesi.

One of the main issues during the post-violence discussions had been how to map the influence these conflicts had on women's lives and what priorities should be set to address the plight of women in post-conflict settings. Although the violence had been among Muslims and Christians, the roots of the conflicts were mostly economic, social and political. Each of these factors directly affected women's lives since many women suffered poverty due to lack of access to wealth and opportunities to work or to launch a business. Women furthermore suffered from cultural barriers created by patriarchal attitudes, for example, stereotypes that considered them to be weaker than men. It was clear that women suffer specific effects in the aftermath of conflict as they find themselves in vulnerable positions when, for example, the husband is murdered, and they become the sole caregivers for the children or are victims of rape.[2]

Although these observations derive from the context of conflict, a recurring topic during our discussions was that they mirror the obstacles experienced by Indonesian women in general and by those who are active in interreligious activities. Although in comparison with other parts of the Muslim world, Indonesian women have various options for social mobility and do serve as leaders of interreligious activities of peacemaking and reconciliation, they still need to navigate blatant forms of discrimination and poverty due to persistent forms of prejudice and the lack of social and economic opportunities.

The only part where the Indonesian and Dutch situations overlap in this context is where it concerns women's invisibility in interreligious activities. One of the main differences we could detect was the reality that few in Indonesia will deny that such activities are vital while in certain circles a "dialogue weariness" has taken hold of Dutch society. Although on the one hand several groups such as the *Kerngroep Vrouwentrialoog* insist on questions about how to develop good relationships while remaining different, on the other hand, a

[2] Cf., for example, the proceedings of the workshop organized by the N-Peace Network, "National Civil Society Consultation. Workshop on Perspectives of Women in the Policy on Women, Peace and Security." Manado, North Sulawesi June 8-9, 2011. Available at: http://n-peace.net/publications.

certain inertia has taken hold of some parts of Dutch society. This level of disinterest is based on several ideas, among others that due to material and physical well being, all problems concerning the interaction between people of different faiths, backgrounds and convictions have been solved. In many circles, the focus of Dutch interreligious interactions seems to have moved to discussions on hybridity and the invention of new, interreligious rituals and practices. On a certain level these topics allow for another layer of contentment as they instill the impression that differences between peoples of different faiths have been solved. In that way, Dutch society mirrors pre-1998 Indonesia when state-orchestrated and mandated forms of dialogue, especially held by men in high positions, conveyed the impression of a harmonious religiously plural society. Poso, the Moluccans and other areas in Indonesia revealed the consequences when interfaith engagement is superficial and merely serves as a Band-Aid on wounds of discontent and disagreement.

The essays in this section serve as a reminder of our vulnerability when trying to understand each other's religious point of view, and the necessity of including all parties ranging from the children, to women and others whose voices are seldom heard.

Potential for Women Leaders of Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren) in Promoting Gender-Inclusive Education

Ema Marhumah

This chapter discusses the role of women leaders in the *pesantren* and looks at the various forms of hegemonic power exercised within these institutions that obstruct models of gender-inclusive education in *pesantren*.

Generations of Indonesian Muslim leaders have been trained in the so-called *Pesantren*: Islamic boarding schools. The head of such a school is a scholar of Islam called a *kiai* and is fully in charge of the institution, holding the final authority in all matters. Oftentimes the wife of a kiai, the *nyai*, is in charge of the women's education of a *pesantren*. Her position, however, is not equal to that of the kiai as she equally submits to his final authority. When considering the formation of the students and the distribution of knowledge and power within the *pesantren*, we observe that the high level of authority held by the kiai in fact reflects an imbalance in power. Firstly, male students follow more extensive and in-depth curricula, which means that in terms of religious authority they gain higher positions. Secondly, the gender discourse in *pesantren* becomes heavily male-dominated, creating the regular standards for normative conduct and behavior. Furthermore, it sets the tone for the relationships between male and female students in the *pesantren*.

Nyai and mostly *kiai* are key figures in *pesantren*. They not only act as school leaders and teachers, they play important roles in modeling Islamic values and concepts. They serve as role models and guide their students in public and personal matters alike. The relation be-

tween *kiai* and *nyai* with their students (*santri*) is governed by a religious spirit and the students are not only expected to obey and follow the *kiai* or *nyai*'s instructions, but also their advice, such as whom to marry. This type of relationship gives the *kiai* as well as the *nyai* a powerful position from which to convey their norms and values to the students.

Education in the *pesantren* furthermore has a sacred value, transmitting certain models of Islamic authority, and the values, rituals, and symbols that are accepted in its related communities. Their educational materials are laden with references to truth, correct modes of morality, and authority structures.

In their capacity as second most important person in those schools, nyais can play foundational roles in introducing models of gender-inclusive education into the curricula of *pesantren*. When given positions equal to those of the kiai, they would gain the opportunity and authority to promote gender awareness and create non-discriminatory gender relations within the *pesantren*. Such proactive initiatives would not only change the mindset of scores of future leaders of Islam, but also contribute to vibrant gender discourses in contemporary Islamic thought. Furthermore it would equip the male students in *pesantren* with gender-sensitive knowledge that they can apply to the traditional Islamic disciplines of learning.

Considering the power imbalance between male and female leaders and students in the *pesantren*, we observe that kiais as well as nyais are in positions to change and support an inclusive gender discourse. Not only can they raise the students' awareness on gender issues and promote gender equality in their religious teachings, they can also model this type of equality within their own relation and in the way they govern the *pesantren*.

1. Obstacles for women leaders in the *pesantren* to achieve inclusive education

Since early 2000, the Indonesian government has introduced the so-called "Gender Mainstreaming" policy aimed at increasing women's participation in all parts of society. It is supported by almost all governmental institutions, and nowadays women's involvement in all aspects of life has become a center-stage issue. Among other goals the government aims at fulfilling a quota to fill 30% of the seats in Parliament with women and encourages public and private institutions to

follow suit. Gender mainstreaming has even influenced the educational systems of the *pesantren.*

Arguably, gender-inclusive education is a new idea for the *pesantren* and some have shown fierce resistance to it. Some even created a controversy, claiming that such forms of education are Western models and not rooted in the Islamic tradition. However, the issue of inclusive education, which has given male and female students equal opportunities to obtain an education and become members of a *pesantren* community, is supported by gender sensitivity awareness, which is critical of the cultural bias that has long existed within the *pesantren.*

Since the early 1970s, historians, sociologists, political scientists, linguists, as well as anthropologists have researched the phenomenon of *pesantren.* However, gender issues as an aspect of social life in the *pesantren* have hardly received any attention until recently. During the 1980s, Zamakhsyari Dhofier conducted the first comprehensive research on *pesantren.* As the title shows, *Study on World View of Kiai*, Dhofier focused on the position and role of *kiai*s in developing the social-religious life of the *pesantren.* In *pesantren*, the kiai had become the single authoritative person who was supported by a network of kinship and the intellectual and symbolic power across *pesantrens* and across generations. Meanwhile the *nyai* did not have a significant place in the discussion of *pesantren* as a whole.

The limited attention given to women and the focus on the dominant male figures of the *kiai* and the *ustaz* (teacher) in the *pesantren* discourse point to a blind spot concerning gender sensitivity in the early studies on this educational institution. Before 2000, the three main underlying research assumptions seem to have been that a *pesantren* is a social institution created, run, and developed by men with the kiai and his multiple *ustaz* as the key figures. Furthermore, the position and role of women in the *pesantren* was regarded as less important, subordinate or at times as irrelevant. Finally, it was assumed that the *pesantren* education did not have any substantial social, cultural, or political impact on the lives of their female students. Even if such an impact was apparent, it was not deemed important in the wider socio-religious context.

This imbalance in available material was corrected when in 2003 a study appeared focusing on the role of the *nyai* in the *pesantren.* The research details the experiences of a *nyai* who supports her husband in

managing a *pesantren* on Java.[1] The author, Faiqah, investigates in particular the *nyai*'s role in the traditionally domestic and public division of labor, emphasizing her economic, social and educational contributions. The research concludes that a *nyai* plays an important role in keeping the *pesantren* sustainable as an educational institution by creating innovations in learning methods (272f., 347). These findings contradict previous assumptions that women lack agency when influencing the dynamic of *pesantren* life.

Currently research on the role of women in the *pesantren* is still too limited to construct a conceptual map of social interactions in the *pesantren* based on gender. In principle, a hierarchical structure rules the *pesantren* with the *kiai* in the top position that defines all relationships between him, the students, and the other teachers.[2] Being the final authority, the *kiai* is considered to be the main actor who directs the social dynamics within the *pesantren*. Meanwhile, students are placed at the bottom of the hierarchical structure and strive to move up the ladder to become a *kiai* and one day open their own pesantren.[3] In this process, the student is assumed to be male.

The limited literature that is available about the topic interprets the role and position of the *nyai* in the *pesantren* in relation to this hierarchical model as in general she has a lower position and exercises less power than the *kiai*. The status and position of a *nyai* is determined by her position as the wife of a *kiai*, who in certain cases she was forced to marry. Several studies report cases where the nyai's parents forced her to marry a *kiai* in order to strengthen family relationships.[4] However, some studies focus on the important role the nyai plays in the *pesantren* general and religious education.[5] In some cases,

[1] Faiqah. *Nyai Agen Perubahan di Pesantren*. Jakarta 2003.

[2] Chumaidi Syarief Romas. *Kekerasan Kerajaan Surgawi*. Yogyakarta 2003. 27. Romas did not say that all pesantren had a rigid hierarchical structure and were patriarchal. He also compared hierarchic structures within various pesantren ranging from conservative to more horizontal models that helped monitor and limit the kiai's authority (cf. 39).

[3] Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi tentang Panandgan Hidup Kiai*. Jakarta 1986. 52f. and 82.

[4] Faiqah, *Nyai Agen Perubahan*. 307 and Martin van Bruinessen and Farid Wajidi, "Syu'un ijtima'iyah and the kiai rakyat: Traditionalist Islam, civil society and social concerns". http://igitur-archive.library.uu.nl/let/2007-0312-083048/bruinessen_06_syuunijtimaiyahandtheckiairakyat.pdf. 2007, accessed 11/04/08, 34f.

[5] Faiqah, Op cit., 272; Van Bruinessen and Wajidi. Syu'un. Op cit., 35; and Masruchah and Briget Keenan. Working from Within: Using the Legitimacy of Religion to Create Change in Indonesia. in: Geentanjali and Chandimarani (eds). *Sexuality, Gender and Rights: Exploring Theory and Practice in South and Southeast Asia*. New Delhi and London 2005, 175.

a *nyai* also leads the *pesantren*[6] and has gained the authority to interpret religious teaching.[7] Nevertheless, in general as teacher, interpreter and leader of the *pesantren*, a *nyai* tends to interact with female students only.

2. Hegemony of power obstructing Islamic forms of gender-inclusive education

As I have shown so far, gender-inclusive education in the majority of *pesantren* faces tremendous barriers due to the persistent imbalance in power between the *kiai* and the *nyai*. This imbalance is not only based on gender, but also on knowledge. Following Foucault, there is a connection between power and knowledge perpetuated by the forms of education in this religious institution. Various mechanisms within *pesantren* education create gender-biased power structures: behavioral requirements based on certain values and disciplinary actions applied when these value codes are broken;[8] a strict adherence to authoritarian values, sets of rituals, symbolic actions and the supremacy of certain forms of truth that are strongly influenced by cultural codes;[9] adherence to these truths leading to certain degrees of cultural control[10] and resulting in the institutionalization of norms that hold up certain figures and beliefs as ultimate.[11] Thus gender-biased education can become onc of the strategies and mechanisms that keep certain individuals in power.[12]

These patterns of *pesantren* education lead to what Foucault has called a *discourse* intermingled with power; certain sets of messages, discourses, values, norms, beliefs and moral models underpin the construction of a gender ideology.[13] Therefore, all ideas, teachings, messages and forms of understanding on women and men in a society are

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[6] Faiqah, *Nyai Agen Perubahan*, 178.

[7] Masruchah and Keenan, Working from Within, 175.

[8] D.A. Rosenthaland and S.S. Feldman. The acculturation of Chinese immigrants: effects on family functioning of length of residence in two cultural contexts, in: *Journal of Genetic Psychology 4*, 1990, 495-514.

[9] Aziz Talbani and Parven Hasanali. Adolescent females between tradition and modernity: gender role socialization in South Asian immigrant culture, in: *Journal of Adolescence* 23, 2000, 519-644, 616.

[10] Ibid.

[11] J.S. Hirstand L. Thomas. Introduction: Playing for Real: Hindu Role Models, Religion and Gender, in: Hirstand Thomas (eds). *Playing for Real: Hindu Role Models, Religion and Gender*, Oxford 2004, 2f.

[12] Aziz Talbani and Parven Hasanali, Adolescent female, 616.

[13] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. An Introduction*, 1978, 100.

indirect manifestations of power. Knowledge is constructed by certain regimes of power, and works in tandem with the ruling elite. According to Foucault:

> Power operates knowledge continuously and vice versa, knowledge assumes a form of implication and power. ...Knowledge and power are integrated and there is no moment in one period of time where knowledge will lose its dependency to power.[14]

Since power enables knowledge to form a social reality, the power relation among social actors always creates an arena of knowledge.[15]

Referring to this framework developed by Foucault, education as a socialization process, including inclusive education in *pesantren*, is a process of production and reproduction of gender discourses that reflect certain power relations. The domination of certain gender discourse in the *pesantren* is the manifestation of a power relation where one group of agents dominates the other group of agents. Conversely, the power structure in the *pesantren* serves as the explanation of a certain dominant gender discourse. This discourse in turn regulates and normalizes all actions, behaviors and gender relations among the *pesantren* community members.

3. The role of women leaders in gender-inclusive education in *pesantren*

Kiai and *nyai* have the power to change or support the gender discourses that are currently being created in the *pesantren*. They can raise the students' awareness about gender issues and support gender equality in religious teachings, for example, by monitoring the types of religious textbooks that are being used. *Kiai* and *nyai* can also strengthen their commitment to teaching the values of gender equality by their personal behavior and by the way they carry out their daily duties.

They can influence all decisions that regulate the lives of the students, in the school, as well as in the dorms. They can even intervene in decisions taken by some of the *pesantren*'s governing bodies. Decisions taken by the managing bodies will acquire the status of legal power if the *kiai* and *nyai* have given their approval. In summary: the *kiai* and *nyai*'s role in creating models of gender-inclusive education

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[14] Michel Foucault. *Power/Knowledge. Selected interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, C. Gordon (ed.). Bringhton 1980, 52.

[15] Michel Foucault. *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. Harmondsworth 1977, 27.

is vital; they can strengthen negative as well as positive gender stereotypes.

Those teaching in the *pesantren* have various degrees of involvement ranging from major, to moderate, to minimalist. The major role is played by the *kiai* who holds the highest authority in the *pesantren*. As the school's owner, he makes the most strategic decisions and teaches the main religious classes to both male and female students. None of the *nyai* holds this high position, not even if they function as associate to the *kiai* (*badal*). The moderate role is held by *kiai* and *nyai* who are in leadership and decision-making positions in the *pesantren*, but are neither involved in the daily learning process, nor do they interact directly with students. Most of them are young, junior *kiai* and *nyai*. Meanwhile, those holding a minimalist role do not take part in any decision-making processes.

As I mentioned earlier the dominant gender discourse in a *pesantren* reflects an ideological truth system that is adopted and applied by the school's community, specifically the students. It is enforced in various ways, often involving a mechanism to discipline students' behaviors and attitudes. According to my observation, methods of regulating the behavior of students include: written sets of rules to maintain order within the school; speeches and sermons that convey certain values, norms and accepted modes of behavior; religious threats and sanctions when students violate the prescribed ethical, cultural and moral codes. Furthermore, there are numerous unwritten rules concerning modes of behavior and habits that are considered acceptable or unacceptable within *pesantren*. The disciplinary process also takes place within the personal relation between *kiai* or teacher and students and by monitoring the students' learning progress. Interfering in the academic achievement and learning progress in a *pesantren* is also a way of disciplining students, because in this process, students are asked to accept, understand and comprehend certain gender models and ideologies. Finally, the schedule of sermons and rituals inside the *pesantren* by itself can serve as a mechanism to discipline students, providing certain routines that lead to specific goals.

At the same time, students have to obey the ever-present demands in respecting authority, values, rituals, symbols and certain truths that are upheld in the pesantren.

Conclusion

Gender inclusive education in the *pesantren* should emphasize the position and role of the nyai. If given opportunities and the necessary platforms, *nyais* can play important roles in promoting ideas of gender equality. Especially when her position is equal to that of the *kiai*, non-discriminatory gender relations can emerge in the closed off world of the *pesantren*. This essay attempts to address several issues concerning gender inclusive education in the *pesantren*. It is clear that the mindset in the *pesantren* concerning structures of power and authority that influence the gender discourse needs to change. In order for this effort to succeed, all those present in a *pesantren* should be addressed, including the *kiai*, *nyai* and teachers, as well as the associates or *badal*. When dealing with the problems of women today, we need new understandings about gender relations based on Islamic values. By using historical analysis, as well as by referring to the traditional disciplines, the entire *pesantren* community can become more sensitive towards women's issues and understand contemporary gender issues. In order to create a more dynamic and open-minded atmosphere, all students in the *pesantren* should be involved. Furthermore, alternative studies on gender and Islam need to be added to the curriculum. There is a need for a model of understanding gender in Islam that can accommodate traditional gender concepts that are compatible with and draw from Islamic teaching. Mining the Islamic tradition will help the male leaders, especially the *kiai*, to become familiar with new ideas about gender and prevent them from feeling threatened by the new mindsets. Among others, the Sunnite tradition of the *Ahlus Sunnah wa al- Jama'ah* needs to be reinterpreted in order to infuse it with principles of gender. This is an exercise that is already starting at the Islamic universities all over Indonesia. After alL the issue of "gender streamlining" has taken center stage throughout the country and its strategic plans as set forth by the Ministry for Women's Empowerment can encourage traditional institutions such as the *pesantren* to accept learning about contemporary issues that affect and influence the life of women.

When the authoritative bodies and teachers in the *pesantren* have become more sensitive towards gender issues, we need to introduce gender-inclusive teaching models, followed by gender-sensitive management models. Lastly, there is a need to develop learning models that are dialogical and discursive which will create a more open culture of dialogue among students, kiai, nyai and teachers. These ap-

proaches will help students to learn how to express and articulate their points of view. Needless to say, the government can assist in each of these steps as it concerns the education of an important part of Indonesia's population and the future of Islamic leaders.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Kupang. A Study of the Views and Practices of FGM in three Islamic Communities

Frederik Y.A. Doeka

While hard figures are difficult to come by, researchers have found that even today, considerable numbers of Muslim girls in Indonesia are being circumcised.[1] Although in 2006 the Indonesian government banned the practice, in 2011, the Ministry of Health issued official guidelines for performing it. Large parts of the Muslim community living in the city of Kupang are following the same practice that is known as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Although Muslims are a minority in the city that has a predominantly Christian population, Kupang's mayor even coordinates an FGM event annually. To get an idea of the scope of this practice, in one mosque, we counted the number of girls circumcised during the year 2012 in the Istiqomah Tuak Daun Merah or Kupang Mosque, and arrived at the number of thirty-four girls.[2] Similar activities were organized by private committees in the Nurul Mubien Namosain Mosque, the Baiturrahman Perumnas Kupang Mosque, and the Al-Mutaqin Walikota Kupang Mosque.

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[1] Cf. Meiwita Budiharsana, Lila Amaliah: Budi and Erwinia Utomo, *Research Report Female Circumcision in Indonesia: Extent, Implications and Possible Interventions to Uphold Women's Health Rights*. Jakarta 2003; Andree Feillard and Lies Marcoes. Female circumcision in Indonesia. To 'Islamize' in ceremony or secrecy, in: *Archipel* 56. 1998. 337-367; The Population Council: Female Circumcision in Indonesia. Extent, Implications and Possible Interventions to Uphold Women's Health Rights. Research Report. Jakarta, September 2003. Available at: http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/frontiers/reports/Indonesia_FGM.pdf.

[2] Sufali Ahmad Hasan (53 years), head of Sub Division of Social and Religion in the City Government of Kupang, interview, Kupang June 29, 2012.

This essay investigates the private and public rationale people use to support the practice of FGM that Muslim families in Kupang do voluntarily. FGM deprives a woman of agency over her own body and infringes on her reproductive rights. In Indonesia the practice is widespread and has become more prevalent after radically minded Muslim groups started to advocate it as a purely Islamic practice.

1. Background

The city of Kupang is the capital city of West Timor, or East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. This city also is, in administrative terms, a *kota madya* (city area) which has the same status as a regency (*kabupaten*) within the Indonesian administrative system. Kupang is a multi-ethnic city of the tribe of Timor, Rote, Sabu, Flores, a small number of ethnic Chinese and migrants from Java, Bugis, Buton, Makasar and several other tribes. But regardless of the ethnic diversity that exists, Kupang residents refer to themselves as "Beta orang Kupang" (I am Kupangese).

Based on data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS Kupang) in 2011, around 13.5 percent of Kupang residents (349,344 total) were Muslim, 84 percent Christian (Protestant and Catholic) and the rest Hindu or Buddhist. Though they are the second largest religious group in the city, in the rest of East Nusa Tenggara, they are just 8 percent of the entire population of 4,679,316, which is 89 percent Christian.[3]

The populations at the mosques where I did my research are mostly made up of immigrants and represent various parts of Indonesia's population. In the Nurul Mubein congregation, there are about 300 people who hail from Java, Bugis, Buton, Rote and Solor. Most members are fishermen.[4] The Baiturrahmaan mosque was built in a new settlement called "Perumnas". It started with one hundred households but has seen a sharp increase in members as new residents moved in. The majority of people in this area work as civil servants.[5]

The al-Muttaqin mosque is situated in the Kelapa Lima Village, Kupang City. When the mosque was established in 1997, there were only 150 families. Now, it has over 700 members who work as civil servants, entrepreneurs, retirees, professionals, employees, small trad-

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[3] http://nttprov.go.id/provntt/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=108&Itemid=111 and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Nusa_Tenggara.

[4] Observation Report by Kelompok Mahasiswa Semester V Fakultas Teologi UKAW, 2011.

[5] Ibid.

ers, and unskilled labourers. These members also come from different ethnic communities across Indonesia: Buginese, Javanese, Alorese, Sumbanese, Solorese, Makasarese, Sumaterans, Rotenese, Sabunese, and Timorese.[6]

2. Non-religious and Religious Views on FGM

The World Health Organization (WHO)

The World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, and the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 all considered FGM to be a violation of a woman's reproductive and health rights. The definition of FGM refers to all procedures from partial to total removal of the external female genitalia or other injuries to the female genital organs whether for cultural or any other non-therapeutic reasons (WHO, 1996).[7] Female circumcision is inevitably a form of FGM, and thus the term FGM is more accurate and precise.

There are four types of FGM that can be defined as violating a woman's reproductive and health rights. The main three are: 1. removal of the clitoris only (clitoridectomy); 2. removal of the clitoris and inner labia (labia minora); and 3. (infibulation), removal of all or part of the inner labia (labia minora) and outer labia (labia majora), and usually the clitoris as well. Typically the wound is fused, leaving a small hole for the passage of urine and menstrual blood. It has to be opened for intercourse and childbirth. About 85 percent of women undergo type 1 or 2 of the forms of Female Genital Mutilation; the rest undergo the third form. Other actions are categorized as type 4; these involve the symbolic pricking or piercing of the clitoris or labia, removing the skin of the clitoris (prepotium), cutting into the vagina to widen the vaginal area, and introducing corrosive substances to tighten the vagina.

In their 2003 report, the Indonesian Population Council, divided FGM as practised in Indonesia in two main groups: "symbolic only" where there is no incision or excision (28% of all the cases they studied) and "harmful" forms, involving incision (49%) and excision (22%).

In their research of 1999, Andree Feillard and Lies Marcoes, still observed that most forms of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in In-

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Population Council: Female Circumcision in Indonesia. 5.

donesia, involved cutting (*memotong*) off the tiny upper part of the clitoris until it was bleeding.[8] In Arabic, the term that is usually employed is *khafd*, meaning "reduction of the clitoris".

Views Based on the Qur'an and Hadith

The Qur'an teaches Muslims to encounter God through prayer (*shalat*). To pray, Muslims must be clean or pure. Being clean or holy indicates the nature of God's essence. This is confirmed in Qu'ran 30 verse 30, "So set thou thy face steadily and truly to the Faith: (establish) Allah's handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind: no change (let there be) in the work (wrought) by Allah. That is the standard Religion: but most among mankind understand not."

The Hadith or Tradition mentions five requirements to reach a state of ritual purity: (1) to cut the pubic hairs, (2) to cut the whiskers, (3) to cut the mustache, (4) cutting the nails and (5) the circumcision of men (sunat). Abraham, who is an important prophet and model for Muslims, is believed to have been the first believer who introduced the practice of circumcision. According to the Tradition, Abraham circumcised himself using a hatchet at age 80.[9]

As for the procedure for women, according to the Hadith collection by Abu Dawud, a woman was being circumcised in Medina "A woman used to perform circumcision in Medina. The Prophet (*pbuh*) said to her: Do not cut severely as that is better for a woman and more desirable for a husband."[10] Thus the Prophet Muhammad advised to refrain from extensive cutting, as it would interfere with a woman's pleasure during sexual intercourse. Some contemporary Indonesian Muslim scholars interpret this quote to be an indirect prohibition of FGM as it hurts women and diminishes their sexual desires.

Classical Muslim jurists, however, have interpreted this Tradition literally; the influential scholar al-Shafi'i (d. 820 CE), for example, stated that circumcision is obligatory for men and women. However, a clear consensus about the circumcision of women is lacking as many

[8] Feillard and Marcoes, *Female circumcision*, 359.

[9] Online hadith collection: http://www.hadithcollection.com/component/itpgooglesearch/?view=search, accessed 16/02/13.

[10] Book 036, Hadith Number 5251. http://www.hadithcollection.com/download-hadith-books/download-abu-dawud/397-abu-dawud-book-36-general-behavior/download.html.

jurists consider the practice as just sunna (recommended) rather than obligatory (*wajib*).[11]

Lack of consensus is also visible among official government offices as well as among Indonesia's Muslim organizations that guide the large population of Muslim believers. The practice has been on the rise as a confirmation of Muslim identity and spurred the organizations of Muhammadiyah, Nahdhlatul Ulama (NU) and the national ulama council (MUI, Majelis Ulama Indonesia) to issue official statements of guidelines concerning the practice. The MUI strongly opposed the government's decision to ban the practice and in 2008 issued a fatwa advising that women undergo the procedure but that not too much is being cut.[12] The Muhammadiyah organization advised against it although many within its circles believe it to be advisable for women.[13] In 2010, NU followed the advice of the MUI and issued a fatwa approving FGM but also advising against "cutting too much".

3. FGM Practices in Three Mosques in Kupang

The WHO rejects all forms of FGM and there is no clear consensus concerning the practice of FGM among the scholars of Islam. Thus our guiding research question was what rationale was given by individual Muslims in the three mosques of Nurul Mubein-Namosain, Baiturrahman -Perumnas and Al-Mutaqin-Walikota to have their female children circumcised. Why do they, or their parents, think the practice is necessary, and do they follow any of the teachings in the Qur'an, tradition, or the opinions of the Muslim scholars in their reasoning?

A Legacy of the Prophets, Hygiene, Sexual Pleasure, and Reducing Female Desires[14]

The imam of the Nurul Mubein mosque, Abdul Kadir Maliasen (51 years), only has a high school education but was trained to lead a mosque by his father Awam Maliasen. Mr. Maliasen was a construction worker and served as the second imam of the Mosque Nurul Mubein during the 1950s. Mr. Abdul Kadir Maliasen encourages his

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[11] Ema Marhumah. Mencari Akar Ajaran Khitan dalam Islam. Unpublished paper. Yogyakarta 2012.

[12] Politik Indonesia. "Dunia Medis Tak Mengenal Sunat Perempuan." 05/02/11. Accessible at: http://www.politikindonesia.com/index.php?k=politik&i=21534.

[13] Center for Population and Policy Studies Gadjah Mada University. "Male and Female Genital Cutting among Yogyakartans and Madurans." Yogyakarta 2002, 12.

[14] Interviewers: Fredrik Y. A. Doeka, Arni Oematan, Martina Ouwpoly, Mince Modok 08/02/12.

community to practice FGM with the rationale that it "cleans" the girls. He was aware that the practice is mentioned in the Qur'an and Hadith but was not sure where to find the precise passages and the advice they contained. In his mosque, girls were circumcised between the ages of 40 days and 7 months. FGM is done not by season or during specific celebrations in the congregation, but at the family's request. During the past three years, more than one hundred girls had been circumcised in his mosque.

Both Abdul Kadir Maliasen and his wife, Nurhayati Maliasen-Arkiang (49 years), viewed FGM as a legacy of the prophets. Therefore, as Muslims, they felt compelled to continue the tradition. They also argued that FGM should be done for reasons of hygiene and health. Mr. Adam Asrakal (47 years), a teacher in one of the high schools in the city of Kupang, said that there were two purposes of female circumcision. Firstly, it enhances a woman's sexual pleasure and secondly, it mutes the female desires. One of the women performing the procedure at the Baiturrahman Perumnas mosque, Mrs. Nirwana Hajjah Kandolo Bajo (62 years old), also considered cleanliness during the ritual prayer as the most important reason to perform FGM. According to her, if a woman has not been circumcised, urine will store inside the clitoris, which can make her sick or even cancel the validity of the ritual prayers.

According to Hajji Amir Kiwang (66 years old), the imam of the Baitturrahman mosque, FGM is very important. When viewed in terms of health, FGM for women would be useful, healthy and clean, for in his opinion, it prevents illnesses of the female genitals. He also adhered to the religious rationale that FGM should be performed so that the girls are pure and clean during the ritual prayers (*shalat*). Another reason he provided for performing FGM was that it would reduce excessive sexual passions in women. [15]

Mr. Suyanto (63 years old), a retired civil servant who served as chairman of the board of the Al-Mutaqin mosque, confirmed that FGM was based on a command of the Prophet. He argued that FGM was necessary for women so that they could satisfy their husbands and give them pleasure. He also argued that the practice reduced women's

[15] Researchers: Fredrik Y. A. Doeka, Devison Armando Ittu, Febby Wellyannie Nguru, Enggelina Moduhina, Tri Nepa Fay 11/02/12.

sexual passions and could lead to perfecting one self by constraining physical desires.[16]

The procedure is carried out by a female modin or religious specialist who uses basic instruments, such a small pair of scissors. For example, Mrs. Sueba Maliasen (age 80), who is the modin in the Masjid Nurul Mudin Mubein, used to use a small rusty pair of scissors to cut off the end of the clitoris. According to her, FGM was an important religious requirement.

Another modin, Mrs. Nirwana Hajjah Kandola Bajo (age 62) was a retired teacher and had performed the procedure since she was young. According to her, the procedure of FGM is very simple: the end of the clitoris is clipped with the fingers and then cut off. Then she presses her thumb on the wound on the genital organ to prevent bleeding.

The researchers witnessed the procedure on May 6. 2011, when Mrs. Nirvana circumcised her seven-month-old granddaughter. The event took place at 07.00 a.m. and took ten minutes total. Loud Arabic chants or anasheed[17] drowned out the baby's crying. Before and after the circumcision, Mrs. Nirvana recited a prayer in Arabic. She did not know what it meant but told us that the prayer was selected from a copy of the mosque's prayer book.

Finally, when we asked nineteen Muslim women who had undergone the procedure if they had experienced any effects on their sexual behavior. fifteen said they felt no impact on their sexual behavior. We had similar answers from women who had converted to Islam at a later age; eight out of nine interviewees felt there had been no change in their post-circumcision sexual life.[18] One of them, Siti Fatimah (70 years old) who converted to Islam as a teenager, was circumcised at the age of seventeen years. She told us that in order to purify herself before the FGM procedure she had taken seven clay baths and seven

[16] Researchers: Fredrik Y. A. Doeka. Cindy E. Obehetan. Adriyani Amnifu. Kesalon Loni Peni. Endryasmi Marawali 14/02/12.

[17] Anasheed (Arabic: singular nashīd. plural Anāshīd). meaning: "chants" Anasheeds are popular throughout the Islamic world. The material and lyrics of anasheed usually make reference to Islamic beliefs. history. and religion. as well as current events. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki /Anasheed.

[18] We distributed 30 questionnaires to 30 respondents in the Nurul Mubein congregation. They were chosen by the researchers because they have sufficient knowledge about FGM and also practise FGM. Of the 30 questionnaires. only 28 questionnaires were returned. Respondents who returned the questionnaire consisted of 19 women who had been Muslim since birth and 9 converts (mualaf). Their ages range from 17 to 70 years.

baths with water. Guided by a modin or religious specialist she had furthermore pronounced the *Shahada* or Muslim creed.

4. FGM: an Islamic Doctrine?

Our investigations clearly show that in the three congregations we visited in Kupang, the views on FGM are, first and foremost, based on reasons of religion and the desire to follow Islamic rules. Furthermore, sexual pleasure and purification are mentioned as justification for the procedure. The Muslim believers interviewed consider FGM to be part of their religious tradition and obligations. A recurring argument is that it purifies the woman. Being impure could render one's ritual prayer invalid which would be an unacceptable infringement of the religious precepts. The religious texts are not clear on whether FGM is allowed, but the fact that the Hadith mentions it suffices. Although it is not a requirement, it has become a religio-cultural tradition practiced in various degrees by Muslims in Kupang, as well as in the rest of Indonesia.[19] Although there is no verse in the Qur'an that supports FGM, most people associate the practice with the Hadith according to which the Prophet instructed the one performing it not to cut off too much in order to prevent the loss of libido in women.[20] As a result, the majority of Muslims in Indonesia, as well as in the three congregations in Kupang city, understand circumcision to be compulsory for men as well as for women.

By imposing certain degrees of modesty on women to prevent sexual licentiousness, women are made the principal actors responsible for preserving the sanctity of the family and reproduction. Within Indonesia's patriarchal society, satisfying the husband sexually has become part of the regulations concerning gender roles, dress codes, veiling and seclusion. This, of course, indicates gender inequality. Meanwhile Qur'an Sura 2:187 clearly states there should be sexual equality between husband and wife:

> Permitted to you, on the night of the fasts, is the approach to your wives. They are your garments and ye are their garments. Allah knoweth what ye used to do secretly among yourselves; but He turned to you and forgave you;

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[19] Sumarni D.W., Siti Aisyah and Julia Madarina, *Sunat Perempuan di Bawah Bayang-Bayang Tradisi*, Yogyakarta 2005, 58-64. For an English summary of this book, see: http://www.rahima .or.id/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=802:women-and-the-tradition-of-circumcision-ideology-behinds-female-genital-mutilation-fgm--focus-27th-edition-&catid=61 :focus-&Itemid=382.

[20] See: Marhumah, Mencari akar, 2012.

so now associate with them, and seek what Allah Hath ordained for you, and eat and drink, until the white thread of dawn appear to you distinct from its black thread; then complete your fast till the night appears; but do not associate with your wives while ye are in retreat in the mosques. Those are Limits (set by) Allah. Approach not nigh thereto. Thus doth Allah make clear His Signs to men: that they may learn self-restraint.

As Riaz Hassan argues, over the centuries, the way male scholars of Islam have interpreted the sacred texts has led to the development of an institutional framework for the management and satisfaction of human sexuality through the imposition of control over women. FGM, in this case, has become part of the framework for the management and satisfaction of the husband's sexuality.[21]

The third view on FGM is that it can make women pure. With respect to this, Islam views the body as the locus of human existence and activity. Islamic law stipulates the regular purification of the body to perform the religious rituals. The body is viewed as the site of social continuity as well as punishment in the case of violating social norms. Purification and renunciation of the body are required for both men and women in Islamic law. Ritual purification involves washing and wiping certain parts of the body, and is invalidated by natural bodily emissions (urine, feces, pus, blood and vomit), sleep, unconsciousness, insanity and sexual contact. Most jurists agree that touching one's genitals (penis, vagina, and anus) also invalidates purification.[22]

Gender Injustice

From a gender perspective, the decision to have the procedure of FGM is generally not in the hands of the women themselves. The parents, encouraged and/or supported by the modin, imams, people who work in the mosque, and even by the government of Kupang city, decide for the girl. At times this decision is made under considerable social pressure. This observation agrees with Nursyahbani's assessment that Indonesian women have no decision-making authority over their reproductive rights, including actions that may interfere with or even destroy their sex organs.[23] In the three Muslim congregations we de-

[21] Riaz Hassan, Religion, Society and the State in Indonesia and Pakistan, in: *Islamic Studies* 38, 1999, 45-62.

[22] Brannon Wheeler "Body, Significance Of", in Richard C. Martin (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, 2004, 111.

[23] Sumarni DW, Siti Aisyah and Julia Madarina, *Sunat*, 82.

scribe here, a system of social management is being supported that puts women under control of the men.

Muslim Communal Identity

In Kupang city, where Muslims are a religious minority, FGM can also be seen as a powerful and central religious strategy to assert Muslim identity. Although it is mixed with local beliefs and traditions, it is a prime symbol of Islamic identity that is further strengthened by songs and prayers in Arabic. Since this aspect of identity does not have a political agenda, the local government does not prohibit FGM; rather it supports the practice by organizing and financing it at certain times in the year.

Conclusion

FGM is a medium that does not support women's rights and agency over their own body and puts them in a secondary position to men. It is a practice that serves the sexual desires of men, regardless of the health risks it poses to women. In fact, when taking into consideration the arguments WHO makes against it, it can be viewed as a form of violence against women.

In Kupang it has become a powerful symbol of Muslim identity that not only serves the Muslim communities but also the local government. It is politically expedient to support the practice in order to assert Muslim private rights. In the meantime, Indonesian Muslim activists for women's reproductive rights stress the reality that the Islamic tradition this practice is based on remains ambiguous. Hence they argue that the re-interpretation of the Islamic sources is vital for the restoration of women's personal rights.

Adding Issues of Peace and Justice to the Theological Curriculum

Nancy Souisa

The violence and ethno-political-religious conflicts that erupted between 1999 and 2004 on the island of Ambon in the Maluku (or Moluccas) archipelago resulted in serious mental problems for the entire local society. The conflicts, which claimed at least 5,000 lives and displaced over a million people, were especially harmful to children growing up in the area. An early experience of violence destroyed self-confidence, infringed on daily lives, and affected development of their worldview. Growing up in this setting, violence became a life value. Some children who grew up with this violence now are students in the seminary where I teach.

This reality places a heavy responsibility on educational institutions in the islands and on me as a teacher as we are faced with the challenge to manage these feelings of grief and pain, as well as to hope. Violent experiences have to be deconstructed and transformed into experiences that allow for peaceful and pluralist living. In this essay, I argue that in our classrooms we should apply methods from gender and feminist studies to promote the study and practice of reconciliation, since many tools from these studies concern issues of justice and creating space for the other. I furthermore propose to recreate our classrooms into a place where students, teachers and community members can meet to find healing. This approach, however, would require us to change our focus from the conventional methods of transmitting knowledge to finding new ways of learning together. It would involve revising specific parts of our curriculum since every course we teach should be related to peace building efforts in the wid-

er social context. Such a change would not only involve an interdisciplinary approach, but also require that the classroom be changed into a space where students as well as teachers can all participate in processes of healing.

Seminaries that train future Christian leaders play an important role in creating such a new culture of peace. To convey new cultures to young people we must use a variety of media that take us beyond the classroom, ranging from the village square to the Internet. Being a teacher of gender studies at a theological school that greatly suffered from the conflicts, I feel responsible for guiding my students through confronting their pain by studying works that can help them transform their experiences. In fact, every course I teach, whether in gender studies, contextual theology, or Christian education, has at its core an element of peace building that can be applied to our direct experience and real-life situation. My feminist perspective on teaching and learning informs my vision that education should be a community oriented activity that allows space for sharing one's life story. Only in this way we can open our horizons to include everyday concerns.

1. Theory and Process

In my class on gender theologies, I combine personal and communal experiences with theoretical approaches. In particular I am inspired by the works of Maria Harris (1989) about curriculum and the spirituality of education. and by Parker J. Palmer's (2009) concept of the Circle of Trust. Furthermore I combine Palmer's ideas on "the inner teacher" with the indigenous Indonesian concept of "learning through feeling (*rasa*)".

Gender Studies

Gender studies and feminist studies are not just about women: their tools help us infuse not only awareness about gender issues, but also about justice into the theological education curriculum. This is vital knowledge for future leaders of religion, as we need to rethink the patterns of relationships between God, human beings and nature. In my view, gender studies as such are closely related to issues of justice and peace. In my classes, I engage the big general topics in gender study along with local needs and challenges such as sociopolitical conflicts.

In order to bridge the gap between the curriculums taught in theological institutions and those taught in the community, I use approach-

es from gender studies in all of my classes. These studies not only help us to understand concepts of equality and justice, but also how to reflect on the types of equality and justice that are needed in a (post) conflict context and how to practice or apply these concepts in real life. Furthermore, I strive to help my students understand what happened in our society from a gender perspective; the political conflicts of interest, the religion-based conflicts, and the communal conflicts. Thus, gender studies can contribute perspectives of justice and peace to the processes of reconciliation.

The Spirituality of Education

In her book, *Fashion Me a People: Curriculum in the Church*, Maria Harris proposed to step away from narrow interpretations of Christian education that focus on "schooling" as the transmission of knowledge and practices in a classroom setting only. Instead, she developed a holistic educational approach that not only embodied a community's beliefs, but also taught how to apply and engage these values within one's life. Inspired by five forms of church vocation: proclamation, instruction, worship, community and service (koinonia, leiturgia, diakonia, kergyma and didache, respectively) found in the Book of Acts, she proposed to integrate these five elements into curricular methods and create a system through which the priestly, prophetic, and political calls of a church could be translated into everyday action. Thus, the Church itself would become the curriculum, rather than the curriculum being limited to a set of printed materials.[1] According to Harris:

> Where education is the fashioning and refashioning of these forms in interplay, curriculum is the subject matter and processes that make them to be what they are. Where education is the living and the fashioning, curriculum is the life, the substance that is fashioned (64).

Circles of Trust

Parker Palmer's ideas of Circles of Trust are based on the belief that we all have an inner teacher that guides us through life's challenges. Listening to this source helps us to find the imperatives for our work and lives and teaches us how to challenge each other without being

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[1] Maureen O'Brien's online bibliographic essay with excerpts from Maria Harris' work: http://www2.talbot.edu/ce20/educators/view.cfm?n=maria_harris. The same page provides an essay by Joanmarie Smith, eulogizing Maria Harris and published in: *Religious Education* 100, 2005, 235-238.

judgmental.[2] The process of sharing our inner thoughts and ideas needs to take place in a safe space that allows us to engage in truth telling without being punished or shamed. In life, as people and as societies, we all move through good and bad times, through periods of darkness and light. Thus by becoming familiar with each other's life stories, we come to levels of mutual understanding; we start to see the complexities and the paradoxes we all face and learn to deal with them and accept them.

Learning through Feeling

When using the tool of learning through feeling, I refer to the concept of *rasa* that the people in Maluku understand as connecting the inner self, the body and the mind. In the Indonesian language, "*rasa*" (to feel) is associated with a subjective evaluation by paying close attention to the inner self when making decisions that are correlated to the past and in connection with other people. The presupposition is that feelings reveal the truth, even when there is no proof or explanation yet for what one observes. In this context, relying on one's rasa becomes being mindful of what is happening around us: to observe signs, be aware, pay attention, to remain connected, in order to create meaning or find an explanation for what we see. Consciously exploring "what the feeling is about" will gather positive energy and transform one's perspective for one's own benefit and that of other people. A "certain feeling" can motivate the mind to investigate the why and how of this feeling and vice-versa. For example, the term "apply your feelings" means that feelings guide a person to show compassion to others. On the other hand, "do not apply your feelings" results in a bad attitude lacking empathy due to the absence of feelings. In Central Maluku people call this process "ale *rasa* beta *rasa* (I feel what you feel and you feel what I feel)" referring to a mutual process of empathy that forms the foundation for creating modes of brotherhood and sisterhood. "Feeling", then, is the formative element of building compassion – for the actor as well as the receiver. Since feeling or *rasa* relates to the inner being of every human being, we should accept it as part of the learning process, since it is the most sincere form of respect we can give an individual. In my view, in higher education that is based on texts, there should be a space for the concept of *rasa* since it is an integral part of our culture.

[2] Cf. the explanation and application of these ideas on: http://www.couragerenewal.org/about/foundations.

The Classroom

On the island of Ambon, all of us (teachers and students) have experienced traumatic incidents of violence during the period 1999-2004. This means that we all come to class with personal experiences. Furthermore, we understand the impact of what happened on the lives of families, on local situations, and how Indonesia's national problems play a role in these particular situations. The classroom can become the space where people can share their personal stories and experiences. These exercises lead to forms of self-transformation toward a culture of peace. For that reason, a classroom has to change from a space in which we transmit a published curriculum with written texts to one where we can also engage with what Maria Harris calls an implicit curriculum and a null curriculum.[3]

An implicit curriculum reveals our assumptions about schooling and learning. For example, when the teacher stands in front of the classroom and lectures, it conveys the understanding that the teacher is in control, the center of attention, and the source of knowledge. The null curriculum refers to materials that are not taught; what teachers or the study books leave out or do not want to bring up in class. It also refers to the methods we use or do not use. This curriculum exists because it does not exist. Often what is not taught is not neutral but based on assumptions that the curriculum should follow certain prescribed guidelines. Being mindful of what type of knowledge the curriculum transfers, and adding what is being left out, can help recreate the classroom into a space for healing processes as well as intellectual exercises.

This approach has important consequences for our teaching and learning methods as apart from the usual academic learning styles, we start to be mindful of our own educational prejudices. Furthermore, it allows us to include learning through feeling and service learning. "Encounter" becomes the new paradigm for a pedagogical model that involves teachers as well as students engaging in authentic dialogue across differences, as in fact the knowledge that emerges is beyond their control. By going out into the community and hearing peoples' stories, the students are challenged to apply critical forms of pedagogy, as indirectly they become co-teachers. Needless to say, for such an educational journey, it is vital to have safe, trustworthy spaces the students can return to and share their experiences.

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[3] Maria Harris. *Fashion Me A People*. Louisville, KY 1989. 68f.

2. Findings

The method of narrative inquiry empowers a storyteller: rather than an object and a victim, one becomes an actor. When the other person hears the story, it is affirmed and validated. In order for stories to emerge, participants need a safe space to openly share stories, including sad ones, about family, church, and society. When we apply theories from gender studies and feminist theology to these stories, we will also be able to pose questions concerning issues of inequality and injustice. At the same time, we can point out the moments we need to express respect for others, restore self-dignity within the community, and when we should show solidarity.

By approaching the issue via multiple learning techniques, we also learn to position a problem within its context and understand the complexity of realities. Since the issues we deal with are closely related to issues of culture, religion and gender, this approach allows us to avoid going into dogmatic discussions.

Furthermore, gender studies can help to create awareness of the holistic person and her needs. In fact, courses in pastoral care and peace education have the same goal. This, in turn, will benefit future leaders of religion when, for example, engaging in pastoral counseling, which is an important part of their work. A religious leader will no longer be satisfied with merely analyzing a situation, but will also engage in it with examples from her personal experience. For example, when discussing issues of justice in the classroom, students can theoretically understand the importance of justice values. They approve of them and would like to apply them in their own lives. However, within their personal families, communities, and within the nation of Indonesia they encounter myriad problems related to forms of injustice. Academic study and community engagement will help them to translate this sense of justice into society where it can serve as a tool for peace building.

3. The Classroom: a Place to Build Peace

As I have argued, the classroom can become a space of healing for students and teachers, as well as community members. To reach this goal, we need to reinvestigate our views on what constitutes knowledge and how we transfer it. Such an exercise would require changing our educational philosophy, educational process, and, eventually, the entire curriculum. The steps I have discerned are that we

first shift the intellectual focus to the needs of the people instead of those of the school or the students only. Secondly, we need to find a balance between transferring knowledge and ways of learning together as a community. Finally, it requires building a high degree of trust as part of the bonding process among participants.

Designing the classroom as a space to rebuild our human community transfers the process of education from the teacher and formally educated people. It takes away their authority based on knowledge. By moving to an approach of sharing knowledge, our current models that rely on intellectual isolationism are being balanced by models based on pragmatic approaches.[4] This alternative method especially challenges the curricular models that remain dominant and are based on imperial and disciplinary views of education. Embodying the struggles and hopes of the community means that apart from the explicit curriculum we also need to be mindful of the implicit curriculum and the null curriculum. This multi-level strategy will guarantee that issues of justice are incorporated in the curriculum so that all participants will be empowered to commit to the practice of justice and peace.

Finally, we need to address participants about their personal experiences and social condition. In the Maluku islands, many young people suffered from the violent conflicts. Being children at the time, it was too early to discuss the various reasons behind this violence. Allowing them now as young adults studying in our universities to relate and reflect on their personal experiences will give them a voice and open ways for them to heal. Equipped with this new knowledge, they can enter society and assist others in finding healing and a sense of peace and justice.

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[4] Cf. Cameron McCarthy and Greg Dimitriadis, Postcolonial Literature and the curricular imaginations. Wilson Harris and the pedagogical implications of the carnivalesque, *in: Educational Philosophie and Theory* 36, 2004, 201-213, 212.

Religious Elite and Perceptions towards Women

Elga Sarapung[1]

This essay concerns the so-called "religious elite": men and women who govern religious communities and institutions and are involved in the processes of decision-making. One could argue that I am part of this elite; I am a pastor and the director of the Institute for Interfaith Dialogue in Indonesia (Institut DIAN/Interfidei) in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. In fact, this position allows me to observe positive as well as negative attitudes towards women and at times I have experienced them myself.

Many of the attitudes I have encountered I ascribe to our culture and to religious mindsets. In my opinion, women in Europe and North America enjoy more opportunities that are equal to men in most spheres of life. The process of emancipation of women in my country seems slower than in the west and coincides with the socio-cultural-political and religious context.

Yet Indonesian society is undergoing rapid changes. The women's movement has resulted in women taking leading roles in the economic, educational, and political life of our country. In fact, the women's movement in Indonesia is quite old, but more or less stalled during Suharto's New Order Regime (1966-1998), which promoted the Dharma Wanita women's organization that discouraged any criticism

[1] This essay is based on my presentation at the Conference on Religious Activism and Women's Development in Southeast Asia: Highlighting Impediments, Exploring Opportunities, November 20-21, 1999. A slightly different version of the essay was also published in: Noor Aisha Abdul Rahman (ed.), *Religious Activism and Women's Development in Southeast Asia*, Singapore 2012.

and expounded a philosophy of loyalty to husbands and the regime.[2] A new phase started during the 1980s, often through the activities of non-governmental organizations, and has been gaining strength ever since.

Several of the organizations advocating for the rights of women are religious. For example, in Protestant circles, women started to rally around the ideas of feminist theology that became known in Indonesia during the early 1980s.[3] They became even more engaged when the World Council of Churches declared 1988-1998 to be the decade for women. The member churches of the Communion of Indonesian Churches (the PGI) also participated in the activities of this decade by organizing workshops on gender issues and highlighting women's activities.

Women's organizations have been independently active in education as well as in the transference of religious and cultural awareness. They have become part of civil society and have been successful in creating awareness about the role of women as citizens who are involved in many areas of the public sphere, namely in politics, economy, education, technology and religion.

Despite the aforementioned progress, a lot more needs to be done concerning the role of women in society. Patriarchy still prevails in many places in Indonesia and in many areas of the nation women's main role is still domestic. When working, women often do the administrative jobs as secretaries or receptionists, and rarely take part in the decision-making process. Furthermore, incidences of domestic violence and discrimination in public and private life still prevail in many parts of Indonesia.

1. The Religious Elite and Women

Many of the world religions are considered to be patriarchal. What does this term mean? Is religion only a creation or projection of the interests and imaginations of men and a justification for men's wish to demean and control women? Does the adjective "patriarchal" refer only to a social organizational system within which heredity is traced down from the male line? Or does this expression refer to a complicated social reality and history, involving not only differentiation of

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[2] Julia Suryakusuma, *Seksualitas dalam Pengaturan Negara* Liza Hadiz, Astrid S. Susanto, *Dalam Wacana Politik Orde Baru: Pilihan Artikel Prisma*, Jakarta 2004, 354-377.

[3] This movement was initiated by Marianne Katoppo, an internationally known Indonesian feminist theologian.

gender, but also a division in gender roles based on geographical, social, economic and psychological conditions?[4]

For me, there is no easy answer to this question. When considering the attitudes of men belonging to the religious elite, there does seem to be a tendency to patriarchal attitudes towards women. However, religion is not the only force influencing these attitudes; tradition, culture, local practices and beliefs are just as important. The Holy Books of male religion also contribute to this reality as they prescribe norms and regulations that convey a certain gender ideology that places women's position under that of men and allows for male domination.[5] For example, according to Catholic activist Nunuk Prasetyo Murniati,

> In the Catholic Church, the ones in control are men. Women are not allowed to be leaders of a ceremony or service. The Catholic Church has a very strong patriarchal structure. The hierarchy is controlled by men. Women are involved in religious service, but are hardly included in any decision-making. The work of women tends to be in the service of men. In spite of what the Bible says that the Church is the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:16), only the males are considered to be members of the Body. Even the position of St. Mary as the Mother of the Church has not changed the structure of the Catholic Church.[6]

Another question concerns the identity of the religious elite. Who are they? Are they the officials or bureaucrats of religions who control the religious institutions such as the Indonesian Council of *Ulema*, the Indonesian Communion of Churches, or the Indonesian Catholic Bishops Conference? Or are they the individuals leading religious communities, such as the leaders of Qur'an schools (*kiai*), priests, pastors, *pedande*, *Bhikku*?

In my view, both groups form the religious elite as they belong to the circles that make the various religious policies, rules and guidelines, and make decisions that affect their religious communities or institutions. Not only men, but also women play important roles in both spheres of influence.

To get an idea of the role of women in the management of a number of religious institutions in Indonesia it would help to look at the

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[4] Katherine K. Young in: Arvind Sharma. *Perempuan dalam Agama-Agama Dunia*. Yogyakarta 2006, 7.

[5] A. Nunuk Prasetyo Murniati. "Pengaruh Agama dalam Ideologi Gender." Fauzie Ridjal, Lusi Margiyani and Agus Fahri Husein (eds). *Dinamika Gerakan Perempuan di Indonesia*. Yogyakarta 1993, 6.

[6] Op. cit., 8.

actual numbers of women who are part of the governing bodies. Of the 56 members of the Indonesian Council of *Ulema* eight are women;[7] in the core management of the Nahdlatul Ulama organization, there is not one woman among its 29 members. One woman sits on the Central Board of the Muhammadiyah organization that has thirteen members. In both organizations there is the assumption that women need not have a strong presence in the leadership structures as their voices are already being represented by the women's branches of these organizations.[8] The situation is similar among the Christian leading bodies: the Indonesian Conference of Catholic Bishops, at all its levels, is entirely led by Bishops; meaning that there is no single woman. The Indonesian Council of Churches had three women among the thirteen members of its executive council.

The low numbers of women in these governing boards affect discussions, conversations, formulations of policies, and the decision-making processes since the opinions of women could differ from those of the men. If they happen to be on such boards, it does not automatically mean that they were elected or invited based on the desire to create a gender balance. The organization might merely want to fill a quota in order to comply with governmental emancipation policies. In some cases, however, women were invited based on their professional skills, such as expertise in finance. For example, WALUBI (the Indonesian Buddhist Council) was headed by Hartati Murdaya who was one of the most successful women business leaders in Indonesia.[9] However, there is no guarantee that the women who are present in the governance bodies of religious institutions are advocating women's rights. In fact, they might lack the gender awareness to challenge certain misogynic patterns and at times they might even approve of and support them.

Of course, we should not forget that men can be ardent advocates just as well for women's rights. However, until now we seldom see

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[7] Cf. the 2009 list published on the Internet: http://www.mui.or.id/index.php?Option=com conten&view=article&id=52&Itemid=54.

[8] According to Mariaulfah Anshor, in the Main Conference of NU in 2003/2004, there was an agreement that women should be included in the structure of NU at all levels, starting from the core management to the branch management. However, this notion was denied in *Muktamar* 2005 to *Muktamar* 2010. Their justification was that there is already *Fatayat* NU, an institution under NU especially for young women. The same case applies in Muhammadiyah, as there is *Aisyiah* (for women only). (Anshor and Ibu Nurhayati, personal communication, August 16, 2010).

[9] Unfortunately, at the time of this writing she is in jail for corruption.

such individuals influence the various decisions made by religious institutions and infuse them with a strong perspective on gender. If this was the case, we would find much more support for recovering women's respect and dignity and a desire to achieve justice for all citizens of Indonesia.[10]

2. Personal Experiences

My observations of the mindsets of what I call the religious elite and their perception towards women are based on my own experiences and those of other women. In 1999, Margareth, one of my colleagues at Interfidei, attended a closed meeting of Protestant churches that was mostly attended by Protestant pastors, several of whom were lecturers of theology. Others were leaders of local churches, or members of the Indonesian Council of Churches. Some of them were active in inter-faith movements or in non-governmental projects. Margareth, a Catholic, was the youngest participant and the only non-Protestant in the group.

When she returned to Yogya, we discussed her impressions of the meeting since it had struck her that those present all had shown certain patterns of behavior. They had valued power and titles and degrees. People with doctoral degrees had been highly praised, as if they were of great importance, whereas those without a graduate degree had been considered of lesser value. Furthermore, when talking about women they had used inappropriate language: telling pornographic stories or jokes that degraded women, including their own wives or the wives of their friends. Finally, men had dominated all the discussions.

Although we cannot generalize, the above observations are not untypical for such meetings of religious leaders in Indonesia. However, we have to discern between the various groups that are emerging as nowadays more male leaders have gained deeper understanding of gender issues and related problems. They are not that many yet, whether Protestant, Catholic, Muslim, Buddhist, or Hindu. They treat women with respect, however when they hold high positions in their

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[10] Various aspects, whether economic, political, or cultural, are analyzed in terms of comprehending the issue and looking for the solution for liberation of women, with religion being no exception. This is understandable as religion is a social institution, especially for the Asian community, and in general actually determines the whole development of the community. Farid Wajidi, Perempuan dan Agama: Sumbangan Riffaat Hassan in Fauzie Ridjal et al., *Dinamika Gerakan Perempuan*, 11-22.

religious institutions their voices are often not heard as their opinions do not agree with the interests or policies of the organization.

Then there are leaders who do have a good understanding of gender issues, and at times even advocate women's rights. This level of awareness, however, does not translate into their personal behavior towards women as their minds are still clouded by stereotypes. They value their power and position and often undermine women in positions of power. Many of the leaders Margareth observed in the meeting at Puncak fall into this category. At times they advocate to have women's voices heard, but in fact they simply comply with governmental or public expectations and do nothing more than window-dressing. Finally there are still many leaders who neither understand, nor are open to the concerns of women. In general they support gender-biased policies, whether in the religious or public sphere. They ignore the rights of women and any form of appreciation towards women. In their perception, theologically if they are religious elites, or in their cultural, social, and political discourse, women are secondary to men.

Although many Protestant churches in Indonesia nowadays have female pastors, in institutional policies they are often not considered equal or fully accepted. For example, many churches also have internal rules that allow a female pastor to work in general service only and prevent her from being the Chair of the Congregation as well as the Synod. When attending meetings where important decisions are being taken, misogynist and patriarchal ideas dominate the discussions. This reality is due to: a) the theological influence of the Dutch missionaries; b) the educational level of the male and female pastors and other religious leaders present; and c) inexperience and lack of awareness of gender issues. We need to rethink how we prepare our future leaders, male and female, and how women can be truly included in the religious hierarchies.

Conclusion

When considering biased attitudes towards women in religious leadership, we have to realize that the concept of religiosity is sometimes applied differently by men and women. While the male version may seem repressive, it might not be experienced as such by women and there may be differences in perception and practice. Furthermore, there can be great disagreement concerning the role women are allowed to play. For example, when Megawati Sukarnoputri became

Indonesia's first female president (2001-2004), there was a heated debate among Muslim leaders whether or not the Islamic sources allowed a woman to be president. Based on the Holy Scriptures, opinions ranged from acceptance to strictly forbidden.[11]

Religious discrimination against women is still pervasive in Indonesia; in most religious institutions, women enjoy very little space: decisions are made by men; no woman can yet be ordained as a Catholic priest, a Muslim *imam*, a Buddhist *bhikuni* or a Hindu *pandita*. Although in several Protestant Churches women have been accepted as pastors and can have higher positions in the hierarchy, those churches are not free of gender bias either. Discrimination against women due to stereotyping remains. Only education can change this mindset; for example we should scrutinize the respective Holy Books to understand how certain ideas about gender became part of religion.

In addition, it is also crucial to discuss and study the issue of gender via interdisciplinary studies. Such efforts will not only benefit women but are vital to strengthening the position of women as actors in interfaith and peace-building activities. Thus, the role and perspective of religious leaders means a great deal, not just for religious institutions, but for the entire nation.

[11] Cf. among others, Nelly van Doorn-Harder, The Indonesian Islamic Debate on a Woman President, in: *Sojourn* 17, 2002, 164-190.

Muslim Women in the Netherlands and the Intercultural Dialogue

Tijani Boulaouali

In 1995, one of the Dutch Protestant newspapers, *het Reformatorisch Dagblad*, wrote that "Unlike their mothers, many Turkish and Moroccan girls now pursue advanced educations, a professional career, or both" (RD, 3). Now, almost two decades later, this wish that still seemed unachievable at the time, has become reality. Nowadays, Muslim women are active within all levels of Dutch society, creating venues of upward mobility for those following in their footsteps. This essay discusses the many ways in which Muslim women claim a space in and contribute to the various forms of dialogue that are being held within the Dutch context. Furthermore, I investigate the positions these women hold when operating in their own Muslim communities.

1. Defining Dialogue

Why should we engage in interreligious and intercultural forms of dialogue? In my opinion it helps us to gain a better understanding of each other and of various aspects of reality. Understanding and knowing are the first steps to peaceful coexistence in an open setting where everybody is welcome and where ethnicity, skin color, religion, belief and culture play no role. Moreover, engaging in dialogue helps us to overcome societal and ideological barriers. According to Michelangelo Jacobucci[1], it is the best way to conquer 'the enemies of dialogue' who try to reject those who are different or think differently. They

[1] Michelangelo Jacobucci, De vijanden van de dialoog. De oorzaken en aspecten van de intolerantie, unpublished paper, read in Arabic, Cairo 2010.

despise cultures other than their own and allow themselves to be locked up in an egocentric world where there is no criticism or self-examination.

In my view, dialogue is the highest form of communication used by humans. Even when alone and removed from the world we are engaged in inner dialogues as we deliberate certain matters, for example, in the form of self-reflection, remembering things we did, or reconsidering an opinion we have held onto. Such exercises bring relief and assurance. Thus being in dialogue is not only important for social equilibrium and for human interactions, it also feeds our spiritual side. Inner dialogues or monologues on a micro level feed the mind in a world filled with tension and selfishness. Finding inner stability and peace improves society.

Engaging in dialogue in society does not mean that one's point of view should prevail or be confirmed, disregarding the opinion of others. It is also not meant to convey a certain message or push approaches that are polemical or apologetic and hinder true dialogue which takes place when we exchange ideas and sentiments during spontaneous and interactive discussions. We need to listen to each other and not only try to understand the other's story, but also her emotions.

A dialogue reaches its zenith only after those involved go through three consecutive phases that complement each other. First there is getting to know each other when we are being introduced and making contacts with new people. Many encounters do not go beyond this phase of interaction limited to the exchange of general information. Some people move to the second phase where we get to know each other better via conversations, meetings, visits and neighborly interactions. These interactions can happen when at work, in school, on the street, during public meetings or via social media. Only when people know each other better and feel comfortable in the new relationship can they start to truly understand the other's value and move to the level of mutual appreciation.

Dialogue is never unilateral; it has to be bilateral as well as multilateral and takes place in various forms within multiple dimensions of society. It affects the individual as well as the community in many ways. Cultural and religious diversity have become characteristics of Dutch society. This reality leads to different forms of dialogue that contain numerous possibilities and promises for new forms of interaction.

Roger Boonen understands intercultural dialogue to be "A conversation about a cultural topic between two or more discussion partners of different cultural backgrounds who are of different opinions. The goal of the dialogue can range from the minimal goal of mutual understanding and acceptance, cooperation, or friendship, to the most ambitious and least attainable goal of mutual transformation and growth."[2] This definition also applies to interreligious dialogue, whether it is part of a cultural dialogue or stands by itself. In fact, if we could replace the word "culture" with "religion", the quote would still have the same meaning.

2. Engaging in Dialogue in a Pluralistic Society

When we discuss the contributions of Muslim women to the various forms of dialogue within Dutch society, we need to keep in mind that often these women are stuck in and dazed by two conflicting worlds. Each world has its specific conditions and characteristics that cause substantial differences between the two. As a result, a Muslim woman regularly faces problematic dilemmas that are not easy to solve.

To her, Islam does not just represent a set of rituals and texts but a holistic system that governs all aspects of life. This in fact is also the reality of those who resist being a Muslim. For example, the actress playing in the movie *Submission* who challenges the Sacred and the Word of God with her alluring body engages in a form of religious interpretation as she communicates with Allah by asking, begging, questioning, and chiding His injunctions.[3] In other words, "the Islamic factor" represents an existential dimension in the life of a Muslim woman living in the Netherlands. This dimension not only encompasses visible aspects such as clothing, customs, habits and social conventions, but also mindsets. Upon deeper investigation, many Muslim women who claim to be liberal or secular turn out to be more religious than ordinary believers; Islam is simply engrained in their lives, consciousnesses and identities, whether they are practicing or non-practicing Muslims.

[2] Boonen, Roger, Irina, Jos, Ali en Mies, *Interculturaliteit in maatschappij en school*, Antwerpen and Apeldoorn 2003, 277.

[3] *Submission* was a movie dealing with violence against Muslim women based on certain interpretations of the Qur'an. It led to the murder of its director, Theo van Gogh (1957-2004), who was murdered by a young Dutch-born Muslim radical. Somali-born Ayaan Hirshi Ali co-authored the script.

Living in the Netherlands not only means being in a geographical context, but also joining a world of norms and values in which manifold religions, cultures and visions on life interact and compete. Philosopher of Religion Henk Vroom describes it as follows:

> People coming from all over are living together and the boundaries between cultures and religions no longer run across continental lines but across our cities and villages. Behind the green meadows filled with cows we see a minaret next to a church steeple with high-rise buildings on the horizon. In neighborhoods where immigrants live, churches have revived. The Dutch-born population knows individuals who sympathize with Buddhism or Hinduism or have converted to Islam. There are Christians who are open to the beliefs and lives of others, and there are those who consider the other to be competition; or at times even see her as the enemy. We see the same phenomenon among Muslims and Hindus.[4]

We could say that the pluralistic society creates ideal new spaces where people can freely practice their religions or beliefs and express their views. Where religion used to be the shared social value, now it has been replaced by citizenship based on giving and taking. This is a responsible type of citizenship that does not arise from a top-down relation but emerges from communities, from the people.5 All aspects of Dutch society need to be considered from this legal framework, as do its Muslim communities in which women are torn between their religious identity and loyalties to the Dutch environment. So the question for many Muslim women is: how to overcome this discrepancy and integrate into Dutch society while maintaining our own identities?

Our future queen Maxima, who hails from Argentina, said in an interview with the *NRC Newspaper*: "How wonderful it is to be home in two cultures and to move between the two without any problems."[6] In fact, many Muslim women who are firmly established within Dutch society straddle two cultures. This type of existence requires them to be constantly engaged in dialogue, inside the Muslim community as well as when operating in Dutch society. Dialogue here is ever present; it does not only consist of regular conversations and encounters, but comprises every aspect of life: at home, in school, on the street, at work, in the media and so forth. The rest of this essay discusses how Muslim women in the Netherlands participate in this comprehensive dialogue that reaches all corners of Dutch society.

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[4] H. M.Vroom. *Een waaier van visies godsdienstfilosofie en pluralisme*. Kampen 2003. 10.

[5] Dieter Verhue (ed.). *Bouwstenen van burgerschap Een onderzoek in het kader van het Handvest voor Verantwoordelijk Burgerschap*. Amsterdam 2009. 1.

[6] Maxima (Princess). Een Nederlander bestaat niet. *NRC Handelsblad*. September 25, 2007.

3. A Multilevel Dialogue

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), during the past seven years the participation of Moroccan women in higher education has increased by seventeen percent while the number of Moroccan men did not increase. During the year 2011-2012 more Moroccan women than men entered institutes of advanced education. In 2003-2004 the numbers were the opposite. Since that year, when compared to Dutch-born citizens and immigrants from Suriname and the Dutch Antilles, Turkish as well as Moroccan immigrants have all caught up on levels of education.[7]

Research by the Dutch Central Office for Statistics (CBS) has shown that around fifteen percent of Muslim immigrants are interested in participating in politics. In this category, percentage-wise, participation of Moroccans is equal to that of Dutch-born citizens.[8] These figures indicate that the dreams Muslim girls had over two decades ago seem to have come true. Those girls have become the current career women who contribute to Dutch society in numerous and valuable ways. From an interesting newspaper item or a political problem, Muslim women now have become a party in the national and local dialogues that are developing in educational institutions, civic discourses, politics and the media, and in intellectual achievements.

Education

Now that education has become accessible to diverse groups in our population, Muslim women not only participate as students but also as teachers, counselors, researchers and student advisors. Bringing their religious dress, views and rituals into the work place, their sheer presence creates many opportunities for interreligious and intercultural dialogues. At times these interactions can be carried to the public level of media and politics.

Social and Cultural Work

Civic work is brimming with Muslim women who are active in community centers and non-governmental organizations that provide a range of services. Often one of the goals of this type of work is to cultivate and encourage inter- and intra-religious interactions. They foster communication between Muslims of different backgrounds and be-

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[7] Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, *Jaarrapport integratie 2012*, Den Haag/Heerlen 2012, 85.

[8] Op. cit., 162.

tween Muslims and Dutch society. Currently several organizations have been launched to raise awareness about Muslim women: among others there is the Moslima Network in Amsterdam, the National Islamic Organization for Women in the Netherlands (*Landelijke Islamitische Vrouwenorganisatie Nederland*) in Rotterdam, Moslima's for Moslima's in Groningen, the AlNisa organization for Muslim women in Utrecht, and the Foundation for Intercultural Participation and Integration (*Stichting Interculturele Participatie en Integratie*) in Amsterdam.

Politics
As I mentioned earlier, Moroccans tend to be as politically active as Dutch-born citizens. This is not only the case among men but also among women. In 2012, fourteen Muslim members joined the Dutch Parliament; of whom five were women: Khadija Arib, Keklik Yucel, Sadet Karabulut, Vera Bergkamp and Wassila Hachichi. Other well-known political figures are Nebahat Albayrak who was the Secretary of the Department of Justice in 2007 during the fourth cabinet of Prime Minister Balkenende. A well-known former Dutch politician is Ayaan Hirsi Ali.

Journalism
Striking numbers of Muslim women have become journalists, working with TV, newspapers and other types of media channels. Most of them are of Moroccan descent. Some names are: Lamia Abbassi, Hadjar Benmiloud, Touria Ahayan, Laïla Abid, Jamila Zemouri, and Boutaina Azzab.

Academics
Several Muslim women are teaching at Dutch universities. At the same time, fifty percent of Muslim students are women. Among others, Stella van de Wetering teaches at the Center for Islamic Theology (CIT) at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam where she has engaged in numerous interreligious dialogues.

Intellectual Life
With this term I refer to women who are catalysts in public conversations on living in a pluralist society. Most of them are novelists or writers of nonfiction works. Several have become established writers: for example, Naema Tahir (*A Muslim Woman Unveils*, *The Bride*,

Lonely Presence, and *Precious Possessions*). Zohra Zarouali has become famous for her books written for adolescent girls such as *Amel: a Moroccan Girl in the Netherlands, Amel and Faisal, Pursuing My Goal* and *Sanae*. Some women write on Islamic history; Asma Claassen has probed the life of the Prophet Muhammad while Ceylan Pektas-Weber and Samira Bouchibti have probed their Muslim identities.[9]

4. Muslim Women in Dialogue

The Dialogue of Life

Based on the examples I have provided so far, we can observe that Muslim women participate in Dutch society at all levels. At the level of daily life, in local settings, women use any opportunity available to participate in social dialogues among Muslims or with non-Muslims. For example, in Amsterdam-West, Islamic Feasts are considered prime moments to gather, not just to eat and celebrate, but also to get to know each other. The women do not consider the fact that it concerns a religious holiday an obstacle for involving those of other faiths. In fact, without realizing it, they spontaneously practice the Qur'anic injunctions of Sura al Mumtahanah (60:8) that encourages the believers to show respect and justice to those who are not Muslim.

These local initiatives are the foundation of strong social bonds of cohesion that help stimulate discussions on religious acceptance and shared values. However, since most of the women active at this level are not well educated or professionally involved, their activities are often overlooked in the national media. The intellectual contributions of famous Muslim women writers and politicians get most of the attention.

Creating New Discourses

Women who engage in the various forms of dialogue, be it within their own Muslim community, intercultural or interreligious, are risk-takers. When highlighting issues of diversity, improving the Muslim image and conveying what happens in the Muslim community, at times they touch on controversial topics.

[9] The list is long; two more writers that need to be mentioned here are Naima El Bezaz (The Road North, The Devil's Concubine, *The Outcast, The Happiness Syndrome, and Vinex women)* and Fadoua Bouali *(Liberated by Allah. If Only I Had Studied French and The Return).*

Women's engagement in dialogues has also involved connecting with non-Muslims via the various feminist discourses that are emerging among Muslim women in the Netherlands. The first group, albeit a small one, rejects Islam in its entirety. The few women who adhere to this conviction find much support from the Dutch media and politics. Women who propose a feminist discourse calling for liberal forms of Islam represent the second group. They are heavily influenced by Western secular philosophies and represented by young women writers, journalists and politicians. The third group proposes moderate forms of discourse that combines Islamic and Western values. Those belonging to this group are open to participating as Dutch citizens while maintaining their Islamic identities. The fourth group adheres to a conservative Islamic discourse that allows no room for other opinions. In spite of residing in the Netherlands, those belonging to this group distance themselves from Dutch society. They follow a literalist interpretation of the Islamic religious texts, reading them without regard for context, time frame or circumstances.

In their own way, all these four discourses encourage forms of dialogue: intellectual, ideological, humanist or religious. Some carry a political agenda while others propagate a religious message. However, the majority support a humanitarian agenda that promotes human values in the context of responsible citizenship.

The contributions of some Muslim women are daring as they push the moral boundaries, break open forbidden topics, and bring to light all kinds of taboos. While some of the younger writers push the envelope too far by writing erotic literature for its own sake, many discuss sexual themes to educate and raise awareness. It is debatable whether all these intellectual dialogues only serve a woman's emancipation. Often they tie into a discourse that portrays Muslim women as backward and oppressed. However, true liberation does not come from exposing the body and throwing off the veil. True emancipation comes from the brain and lifting the invisible veil that prevents Muslim women from thinking for themselves.

These types of discussions do convey realistic views of the Muslim community: its composition and the dilemmas it faces. Many Muslim women engage in this type of dialogue, in schools, community centers, by translating their stories and poems to movies and documentaries. Contributing to intra- and inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogues, these initiatives convey Muslim realities while at the same time correcting negative stereotypes about Muslim communities.

5. Two Initiatives: Fadoua Bouali and Hagar-Sarah

The first initiative by women I would like to highlight in this essay is the intellectual and literary experiment by the young writer Fadoua Bouali. She describes in a brave manner the inconsistencies, dilemmas and challenges faced by her Muslim community. The second initiative is the so-called Hagar-Sarah project for dialogue between Jewish, Christian and Muslim women. For both initiatives I will analyze how they encourage interreligious dialogue.

Fadoua Bouali

Fadoua Bouali is a Dutch-Moroccan writer, who was born in 1970 in the town of Alhoceima in Northern Morocco. She worked for fourteen years as a nurse in the Netherlands but in 2007 retired from her work to spend a year in Morocco and write her book. Her writing career started in 2001 when she began to compose op-eds about subjects that concerned her personally: Islam, Muslim women, immigrants. Writing allowed her to express her frustrations with the nonsense and misinformation she read and heard in the media about her Islamic faith. After becoming a columnist, she started to write books: *Liberated by Allah* (2006), *If Only I Had Studied French*, and *Adventures of a Nurse* (2007).[10]

According to Fadoua Bouali, everyone is allowed to understand and know about the problems Muslims go through. This approach provides space for all: Muslims and non-Muslims, immigrants and Dutch-born, women and men, young and old. In *Liberated by Allah* she tells how she approached writing the book:

> I decided to go to Morocco for one month to work on the book. In fact it was like a puzzle that needed to be put together. The pieces came from people in my environment; family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and people I happened to meet at work or during meetings. They all were from different backgrounds: Muslim, Christian, Jewish, atheist, heterosexual or homosexual. Some were highly educated while others never attended school (15).

The writer indicates that from the beginning she positions her thinking within the framework of interreligious and intercultural dialogue. She is not only concerned with problems within the Muslim community, others have an important presence within her discourse as well. While she engages with the paradoxes and problems the Muslim community

[10] For the column cf.: https://sites.google.com/site/fadouabouali/home.

faces, non-Muslims play a role in her story as compatriots, witnesses, and partners.

Bouali's book searches for the core of the true Islamic society, which differs radically from how contemporary Muslims experience it. Her society is saturated with critique on all types of situations and themes ranging from sexuality, to morality, to emancipation, to raising children. Realizing that the emancipation of Muslim women has become a hot topic, she considers the subject by looking at her mother, grandmother, sisters and herself. This strategy allows her to balance of her life as a woman, since in her view every woman, Moroccan or Dutch, should now and then stand still and reflect on her position as a woman (103). While paying attention to the Muslim woman who in name of "Islam" experiences suppression within her own community, Fadoua Bouali contributes to dialogue within Dutch multicultural society. For the sake of this dialogue and to improve the position of women, she encourages Muslims to return to the sources of Islam and to reread and reinterpret the holy texts.

The Hagar-Sarah Project

In recent years Muslim women have launched numerous interfaith projects, nationally as well as locally. The Hagar-Sarah project started in 2009 with a focus on the shared roots of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim religions. These three religions of Abraham share the same foundational story in which "women pass on life." They have named the project after the two patriarchal mothers of humanity, Hagar and Sarah, since without these women the patriarchal father, Abraham or Ibrahim, would not have existed.[11]

This initiative encourages interreligious dialogue between the daughters of Hagar and Sarah who all are Jewish, Christian and Muslim. They all share the source of our being, our truth and tradition. So, the project's founders wonder, why can they not share a common goal? The project furthermore pays attention to the role of women within society when facing male authority. The leaders of the project explain that their point of departure is that "Men have always held the religious authority. During the last decades this reality is changing and women have started to speak for themselves. They investigate the in-

[11] http://www.hagar-sarah.nl.

fluence of male interpretations [of religious texts] and how these interpretations can hinder women's personal growth in their faith."[12]

Conclusion

In this essay I have described how Muslim women contribute to interreligious and intercultural dialogues in the Netherlands. As I have shown, their presence in these activities is so prevalent that each theme and level of dialogue discussed here merits discussion in a separate article. Although we can limit our investigation of women's agency to their participation in various forms of dialogue, I have proposed to look at Muslim women's role in the Netherlands from the point of view of their presence and participation in areas of society that influence constant efforts of intercultural and interreligious dialogue. As I have shown, Muslim women are highly active at all levels of society and hence engage in myriad forms of dialogue. We can witness the influence of their contribution throughout society; from Muslim homes, to schools, at work, and in the media. Women are the ones who have made "Muslim" in the Netherlands part of the mainstream.

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[12] http://www.vrouwensynode.nl.

Women's Agency and Role in Inter-Religious Dialogue Indonesia – the Netherlands

Nelly van Doorn-Harder

The short essays in this section cover a broad range of discussions. What I found the most striking is that none of the Indonesian writers discusses the manifold Indonesian projects and institutes for interfaith and peacemaking launched and led by women. Neither do they address the myriad activities Indonesian women are involved in. They live in a pluralist society that not only counts six official religions but also plural ethnicities and cultures, so the urgent need for activities that strengthen interreligious harmony is obvious. However, they write about issues that ideally speaking should be addressed first before entering such dialogues as equal partners.

Ema Marhumah points at conventions with regard to the hierarchy among men and women leaders in the *pesantren*, the traditional boarding schools where students engage in deep study of the Qur'an and Islamic texts. Guided by the *kiai*, the religious scholar who is the *pesantren*'s religious and administrative leader, male students gain deeper knowledge of the Islamic texts than women. As many of these texts transmit hidden and open biases about women, entire generations of future leaders graduate with misogynist mindsets.

Fredrik Doeka investigated the symbolic and religious meaning of the practice of circumcising Muslim girls in the city of Kupang. During the past two decades, this practice that undermines a woman's reproductive rights and in many instances causes real physical harm is becoming more widespread and institutionalized in Indonesia. Even though it is officially forbidden by the government, religious leaders encourage the practice and believers follow it since it is considered a

guarantee of a woman's purity and has become a powerful symbol of Islamic identity. This boundary is ever-present also when engaging in interreligious dialogues.

Not only can the focus on a woman's body create boundaries between religions, as feminist scholar Jeannine Hill Fletcher has pointed out, interfaith gatherings can also become platforms where "interfaith harmony takes place *over women's bodies*."[1] Often women are not part of such meetings.

Nancy Souisa suggests applying methods from gender and peace studies throughout the curriculum at the level of higher education in the Moluccas in order to allow students to come to terms with the violence they witnessed during the early years of the new Millennium. In her view, due to their stress on matters of justice and equality, these studies are natural places to find tools that help students overcome their traumas and help them to develop and be engaged in models of reconciliation. She furthermore argues for broadening the scope of teaching methods to include community-driven elements. Instead of placing the teacher's academic knowledge at the center, the curriculum shifts to including the experiences and life stories of the students. Nancy Souisa furthermore highlights the importance of paying attention to the concept of *rasa*, feeling that is an integral part of culture in the Moluccas and elsewhere in Indonesia. Feeling here refers to becoming mindful of one's surroundings by connecting the inner self with body and mind. Souisa's plea to pay attention to the element of *rasa* coincides with feminist voices who call for strengthening the interpersonal dimension of interfaith. Michelle Voss Roberts has explored this concept by analyzing *rasa* in the context of Hindu-Christian dialogue in which *rasa* carries the meanings of taste, relishing, or the essence of a thing.[2] According to Voss-Roberts, exploring the various connotations of *rasa* (physical, mental or emotional), can help to unpack the under-theorized work that emotion plays in interreligious dialogue. "*Rasa* offers a theoretical framework for understanding and incorporating affective responses to religious difference" (189).

[1] "Gift to the Prophet from a King. The Politics of Women in Interreligious Dialogue." (forthcoming).

[2] Michelle Voss Roberts, Beyond Beauty: Aesthetics and Emotion in Interreligious Dialogue, in: Catherine Cornille and Jillian Maxey (eds), *Women in Interreligious Dialogue*, Eugene, Oregon 2013, 188-208, 189 f.

Elga Sarapung reflects on hidden biases among the religious leading elite in Indonesia that she observes while she herself belongs to this group in her capacity as the Director of Interfidei, a large organization for interfaith dialogue. Her observations resemble the mechanisms that Frances Adeney describes in her monograph about Indonesian Christian women: double burdens, ambivalent attitudes and unrealistic expectations towards women in the church. Adeney's quoting a woman pastor who wonders if "Christian influence actually harmed women?" underscores the complex interaction between religion and culture.[3]

Tijani Boulaouali argues that we should broaden our definitions of what it means to be in a dialogue; religious as well as cultural. Looking at Muslim women's involvement in Dutch society, ranging from grassroots activities of celebrating feasts together, to the contributions of women intellectuals, novelists and politicians, he argues that by their sheer presence and the ideas they espouse, these women are in constant modes of dialogue. This point is pertinent to the Dutch situation where many Muslim women entered the country as spouses of uneducated immigrant workers. Boulaouali starts his article with a quote from a Dutch newspaper that in 1995 predicted how second generation Muslim girls would be much more highly educated than their parents since they all aspired to finish high school, college and even pursue graduate studies. Boulaouali writes that "Now, almost two decades later, this wish that still seemed unachievable at the time, has become reality." This situation is starkly different in Indonesia, where since the 1980s society has taken for granted that Muslim women hold high positions as politicians, ministers, professors and medical doctors. Another point Boulaouali makes is that women are as much engaged in inter- as in intra-religious dialogue. This observation in fact seems to run through all the essays; formulating attitudes towards the other is one of many forms of religious dialogue that first starts within the community.

Thus the essays in this section of the volume represent two sides of the coin that constitutes the dichotomy of women's role in interreligious and intercultural dialogues. Many women, often highly educated, are involved in myriad activities, yet remain invisible and across nations their voices seem overshadowed by those of men. Although we do not have much hard data about why women are left out, we do

[3] Frances S. Adeney, *Christian Women in Indonesia. A Narrative Study of Gender and Religion*, New York 2003, 65.

know that within their own communities women face many forms of bias and misogynist behavior. In dialogue, men as well as women take those biases with them and further complicate the picture when engaging with people of different faiths and cultures.

The writings in this section concern two large themes; the first one is about women's role and agency in the interreligious and intercultural dialogue and the second one concerns the importance of intra-religious dialogues, especially where it concerns women's issues. In this essay I will elaborate further on the first topic, as space does not permit to discuss the second theme at great length here.[4]

1. The Women in Dialogue Project

The inspiration for the topic of the role of women in interreligious encounters came from a Dutch project on the same subject.[5] The underlying rationale for launching this initiative was my own observation that in spite of all the economic, social, cultural and religious differences between the USA, the Netherlands, and Indonesia, in all three countries women's role in dialogue was often not as prominent as that of men. Somehow they seemed to be held back or to be holding themselves back from prominent positions in interreligious and peacebuilding meetings, especially those at the higher levels.

Forms of gender inequality are not limited to Indonesia but are still widespread in the USA and many European countries as well. In order to understand the mechanisms that perpetuate gender discrepancies, I gathered an interdisciplinary group of colleagues in the Netherlands and the USA who represent the study of gender, gender and religion, psychology, and anthropology. Using theories and approaches from our respective fields of studies we investigated case studies of interfaith and peacemaking activities with the role and agency of women as focus.

Our observation that women in interfaith dialogue seem invisible seemed to be confirmed by international governing bodies as well. In the year 2000, the United Nations passed Resolution 1325 which stat-

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[4] See, for example: Nelly van Doorn-Harder. In Search of New Approaches to Inter- and Intra- Religious Christian and Muslim Debates, in: James Buckley and Michael Root (eds), *Christian Theology and Islam*, Eugene OR 2013.

[5] Riet Bons-Storm and Nelly van Doorn-Harder (eds), *Dubbele Dialoog. De rol van Gender in interreligieuze Ontmoetingen* [Double Dialogues. The Role of Gender in Interreligious Encounters], Gorinchem 2012. Several of my observations in this essay are based on the various contributions in that volume.

ed that research was urgently needed to understand why men are more prominent at the international and national level of political and peace-building meetings than women.[6] A follow-up report published by the Council of Europe in 2005 acknowledged that it had not been possible to answer this question and that we know little about the cultural and social factors that prevent women in the various countries from rising to the highest levels.[7]

Equally inspired by UN Resolution 1325, the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs at Georgetown University invited fifty women and men active in interreligious and peace-building work to discuss the topic in July 2010.[8] One of the main conclusions of this meeting was that women are active in launching and guiding all types of projects, however, there are few hard data about what exactly they do. Few researchers have looked into the subject. The participants agreed that women are seldom invited to high-powered, political interreligious or peace-building meetings, neither are they asked for advice. Benedictine nun and Director of the Benetvision Organization, Joan Chittister saw the following as one of the main problems in the West:

> Our societies are nowhere near as egalitarian as we think they are. People are sincere in thinking that there has been progress. But there are real differences biologically and spiritually between men and women. The prevailing attitude is that if you have a man, you really have both, because the man will know what is good for both men and women.[9]

According to Ms. Chittister, the dynamics change when women are included at high-level meetings:

> I am completely convinced that until women are more than token members of any movement and institution, there will never be peace or action on environment or real action on poverty. Women bring real differences in terms of style, goals, agendas, presence, and real skills in conflict resolution. The fact that existing institutions do not deal with women in any systematic fashion is a real issue. No one in governments or international institutions sits down

[6] Cf. http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/.

[7] The Council of Europe. "The Role of Women and Men in intercultural and interreligious dialogue for the prevention of conflict, for peacebuilding and for democratization". http://coe.int/equality (Directorate General of Human Rights, Strasbourg, 2005), 59.

[8] An Exploration by the US Institute of Peace (USIP), the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, and the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD). Cf. http://berkleycenter .georgetown.edu/publications/women-in-religious-peacebuilding.

[9] http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-sister-joan-chittister-executive-director-benetvision, accessed February 28, 2013.

with women's groups as they consider major legislation and other measures. But that is what they should do.[10]

At the same time we see the baffling reality that organizations such as Unicef, that work with networks of men as well as women, have observed that women officials tend to be more efficient than their male peers. Women set realistic goals and their promises are often less ambitious than those of their male colleagues. As a result they deliver. Furthermore women are less prone to corruption and encourage cooperation between men and women.[11]

It remains a mystery why there are so few publications about the topic while studies on women and gender abound. What is available tends to be theological.[12] Nowadays we hear more voices coming out of the business world wondering what keeps women from being part of high-level management. The answers range from motherhood to lack of negotiation skills for what still is a men's world. At the same time, the number of women in leading positions in businesses is increasing and they are competing with men on equal footing as managers and leaders.

In summary, through our research we found that being invisible and absent from the highest levels of decision-making venues is not a situation that is limited to women in Indonesia or to Muslim women. It is a phenomenon that equally occurs in highly developed Western countries. Although, depending on people's beliefs, mindsets and interpretation of their holy scriptures, in certain cases religion does play a role; not being able to participate at all levels occurs in many types of venues and activities.

2. Invisible Walls

One of the reasons women stay under the radar seems to be connected with the types of work they do. Especially at the grassroots, in activities aimed at improving the conditions of women and children and

[10] Ibid.

[11] Interview Afeefa Syeed, Advisor US Bureau voor International Development. http://berkley center.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-afeefa-syeed-senior-advisor-us-agency-for-international-development-middle-east-and-asia-bureaus.

[12] The most quoted works are: Helene Egnell, *Other Voices: A Study of Christian Feminist Approaches to Religious Plurality East and West*, Uppsala 2006. Jeannine Hill Fletcher, *Monopoly on Salvation? A Feminist Response to Religious Pluralism*, New York 2005, and the two books by Maura O'Neill, *Women Speaking, Women Listening. Women in Interreligious Dialogue*, Maryknoll, NY 1990 and id., *Mending a Torn World. Women in Interreligious Dialogue*, Maryknoll, NY 2007.

strengthening local communities, women tend to work in groups and collaborative networks. Furthermore, women tend to focus on removing obstacles caused by, for example, natural disasters and poverty. As a result, education and health care are prime areas of women's work. By virtue of the communal character of most of these activities, individual women remain unknown since a group seldom yields visible faces. Taking away women's influence from these building blocks of society can have disastrous effects on civil society.

Michael Trice, whose research focuses on peacemaking, observes that when women are included it happens purposefully with full awareness. He insists that at high negotiation platforms men seldom intentionally exclude women who are their peers in terms of education and credentials. However, in many situations the process of exclusion happens unintentionally. Blind spots, cultural and engrained forms of prejudice, and other hidden mechanisms somehow work together towards forms of exclusion.[13]

The essays by Elga Sarapung and Ema Marhumah seem to agree with the mechanisms of exclusion described by Trice. In his view these mechanisms represent "the *deception* built into the ruse between the intent of the 'outstretched arm' of acceptance and the actual structurally hindering sliding walls of exclusionary practice."[14] Women think they have a chance to participate on higher levels only to be met by a wall that did not exist before. Elga Sarapung writes about women who did participate in the meetings with men while Ema Marhumah discusses the role of the *nyai*, the wife of the *kiai* who in most cases holds the second highest position within the *pesantren*. However, the limits are real and thinkers such as moral philosopher Annette Baier don't consider this type of treatment to be merely unfair, but to be a form of deception that is situated at the intersection of our expectations for success and systemic structures that pretend to include and promise inclusion, and in the end turn out to be empty.[15]

Cognitive psychology research confirms that most people intend to be fair but carry unconscious prejudices that influence our evaluations of others and their work. Researchers point at the problem of the

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[13] Michael Trice, Cruelty and the Exclusion of Women in Leadership, paper read at the AAR meeting on Women, Interfaith and Peacemaking, Atlanta October 29, 2009. Published in Dutch: Liefdevolle" wreedheid: mannen en vrouwen in overleg, in: Bons-Storm and van Doorn-Harder (eds), *Dubbele Dialoog*, 42.

[14] Trice, "Liefdevolle" wreedheid , 43.

[15] Annette C. Baier, Moralism and Cruelty: Reflections on Hume and Kant, in: *Ethics. An International Journal of Social, Political, and Legal Philosophy* 19, 1993, 436-457.

differences in how women and men present themselves, which topics they discuss and how they work at reaching their goals. For example, a USA study analyzing the applications for the position of professor in a medical school found that men referred to themselves as "researchers and colleagues," while women described themselves as "teachers and students." Women had four times more references to their personal lives and often unintentionally used language that raised doubt about their capacities.[16] In other words, women did not present themselves as well as the men did.

Unconscious forms of prejudice are formed when people speak or act differently than we do. Assumptions of lesser capacities are easily formed. For example, USA research shows that students evaluate teachers who speak English with an accent lower than those who are native speakers. Philosopher of Religion, Maura O'Neill has spent much of her time looking at differences in discourse between men and women. She came to the conclusion that men and women have different opinions about how we acquire knowledge and reach judgments and have different styles of communication.[17]

In line with Maura O'Neill's observations, linguist Robin Lakoff found that men often express themselves in statements that end with an invisible exclamation mark while women often produce open-ended remarks that allow room for further discussion. Men consider the invisible question mark at the end of statements made by women as a sign of weakness, while women see it as a way to leave room for further discussion.[18]

Women themselves consider their own contributions of lesser value and importance than those of men. According to Joyce Dubensky, Director of the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, when the Center solicits nominations for its annual peace award, it often experiences problems in gathering enough names of women candidates. It does not occur to women, even those who are very active in interfaith or peacemaking projects, to nominate each other or themselves. They simply don't consider their work important enough and often end up nominating a man. Men have no problem nominating themselves. This negative self-selection translates into women's par-

[16] Donna M. Stringer, Creating and Sustaining Cultural Diversity, unpublished paper presented at Wake Forest University, April 2, 2012.

[17] O'Neill, *Women Speaking*, and id., *Mending a Torn World*.

[18] Lakoff's most famous book is *Language and Women's Place* (1975, re-published by Oxford University Press, 2004). Also see: *The Language War*, Los Angeles CA 2001.

ticipation in high-level meetings. Dubensky thinks that this mechanism is so deeply rooted that women themselves start to believe it to be true that their work is of less value than a man's.[19] As a result, women make themselves invisible.

Before concluding this essay, I have to point out that so far I have used gender as the category to analyze some of the power differences between men and women. However, feminist scholars from Asia and Africa such as Kwok Pui Lan and Mercy Oduyoye criticize this approach as too narrow a lens that does not take local, economic and cultural factors into account.[20] In Indonesia as well as in the Netherlands, there are not only differences in ethnicity, but also in local histories and cultures, and between rural and urban communities. The contributions in this section, although taken from a limited number of geographic locations, clearly show this need to start with the local conditions before moving to more general conclusions.

Conclusion

The essays on women and interfaith show that by using the analytical category of gender to look at this topic, we can see how and why interfaith dialogues fail. In spite of countless grassroots initiatives, the most visible interfaith activities still seem to be the high level meetings. Those tend to be formal, ignoring many of the real problems people face. Certain groups tend to be excluded: women, youth, the poor, and those of radical mindsets. Just looking at the issues women address reveals the complexity of the issues that need to be discussed and that are avoided during formal meetings between mostly religious elite. Women's contributions show us that true interreligious dialogue goes far deeper than religion. Women in fact lead the way in showing that we need to address the underlying issues of gender bias that prevent dialogue activities from becoming forces of true social change.

[19] http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/people/joyce-dubensky.

[20] Kwok Pui Lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*, Louisville 2005 and Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Introducing African Women's Theology*, Cleveland, Ohio 2001.

Hermeneutics

Introduction

Gé Speelman

In this part of the book, we want to acquire more clarity about the praxis of interreligious reading, both in the Netherlands and in Indonesia. We hope that this research may eventually contribute to a deepened understanding by Christians of the Islamic Scripture and vice versa.

The different articles are all the products of authors who are involved in different forms of interreligious contact. Our main question is:

What forms of interreligious reading of Bible and Qur'an exist between Christians and Muslims in the Netherlands and Indonesia and how can we evaluate them?

In this introduction, we sum up the context from which we operate, and the perspectives we take.

In our present-day late modern societies, the Qur'an and the Bible are reaching a hitherto unprecedented readership. These Sacred Scriptures[1] are being read increasingly by people who do not belong to the faith communities that are their guardians and that have shaped the horizons of their received interpretations. Many non-Muslims are be-

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[1] I use the term 'Scripture', inspired by the use of the term in Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *What is Scripture? A Comparative Approach*, Philadelphia 1993. What I particularly like about the approach of Cantwell Smith is that it is sometimes difficult to define which texts are sacred in a religious tradition. When we talk about the Quran, we should bear in mind that for most Muslims, a number of collections of Hadith are also essential. In this article, I refer to the Bible and the Quran, but I am aware that these texts, although they are at the centre of Islam and Christianity, do not exhaust the amount of texts that can be regarded as guidelines for the community and in so far also as 'sacred'.

coming familiar with Qur'anic texts, and many non-Christians know (or think they know) what the Bible is all about.

Sometimes, such external readings fit in with the age-old polemical tradition. The Muslim is then perceived as the (potentially hostile) Religious Other whose Scripture has to be challenged. Or the Christian has to be refuted by texts from his/her own Scripture.

Sometimes also, these readings fit in with the modernist tradition of 'objective scholarship'. Then, the Qur'an or the Bible is seen as the foundational document of another Middle Eastern religious tradition that can be objectively analyzed and de-mythologized.

But there is a third strand of reading by outsiders, an *interreligious* Qur'an or Bible reading where an appeal is made to the common origins of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

1. Who is reading and to what purpose?

We are aware our Scriptures themselves already contain a discourse on the religious other. The reflections on these outsiders are partly positive (they may have some knowledge of the Divine), partly negative (their interpretations of the will of the Divine are defective; they may be relentless enemies of the true Revelation). Increasingly, we are also aware that our Scriptures have an intertextual relationship with other Scriptures. It is, for instance, obvious that a reader of the Gospels will not come to a true understanding of their meaning without a thorough knowledge of the earlier Hebrew Bible, to which each verse of the Gospels constantly refers. Likewise, the Qur'an assumes that God has revealed Himself before in other Scriptures, and the Qur'anic narratives of the Prophets before Muhammad can be read in conversation with the biblical narratives.

This intertextuality of our Scriptures is not confined to references of 'later' texts to what is written in 'earlier' texts. Recently, some Christian and Jewish biblical scholars have explored the way in which their readings of their own Scripture can be enriched by bringing in the Qur'anic perspective.

In his introduction to the Qur'an, Farid Esack distinguishes between the different readerships, both among Muslims and non-Muslims. The Muslim readers, he divides into three groups, between which there is considerable overlap: ordinary readers, who read the text as a source for their faith in God and of their commitment to the Ummah, confessional Muslim scholars who in a pious way and in

connection with the cumulative Islamic tradition search for the deeper implications of the text and its translation into rules for behavior, and critical Muslim scholars, who search for new meanings of the text in new contexts.[2] It may be clear that it is not always easy to distinguish between these three categories. The critical scholar, who may be studying the early history of Islam, can go home and pray from the Qur'an. Critical and more traditional scholars are often part of a lively and respectful debate among themselves.

Likewise, there are according to Esack three different groups of readers of the Qur'an outside the Muslim community: polemical readers, who are only interested in the Qur'anic text as a body of proof-texts for their attacks on Islam, 'revisionists' or scholars who set themselves up as critical, but objective outsiders and last but not least participant observers, who engage themselves with the meaning of the Qur'anic text. For them, the Qur'an is not just any book, but a book of faith that they can find inspiring and challenging in many ways.[3] Between all these groups of readers, both Muslim and non-Muslim, different types of conversation are taking place about the meaning of the text. The same distinctions Esack makes for the Qur'an can also be made with regard to the Bible. Just as there are polemical, 'objectivizing' and assenting readers of the Qur'an from among the non-Muslims, these categories of Bible-readers also exist within the Muslim community. Many polemical debates of Muslims with Christians are taking the texts from their Scriptures as a focus of attack. On the other hand, there is also a growing body of shared scholarship and mutual respect when it comes to the analysis of Scriptures. And, last but not least, there is a small but growing community of people reading Scripture together.

Of course, this interreligious form of interpretation has older provenance than is often assumed. Islamic mutafassirs in the classical period made good use of available information from Jewish and Christian resources to clarify the Qur'anic text. Scholars like Petrus Venerabilis and Robert Ketton wrote their translations of the Qur'an with polemic purposes, but were sometimes quite accurate in their assessments of the meaning of the text.[4]

In the Netherlands, these three forms of reading by outsiders: the polemic, the 'scholarly objectivist' and the interreligious reading are

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[2] Farid Esack, *The Qur'an. A Short Introduction*, Oxford 2002, 3.
[3] Op. cit., 5.
[4] Thomas E. Burman, *Reading the Quran in Latin Christendom*, Philadelphia 2009.

all there, sometimes inextricably mixed, sometimes existing side by side. In the Netherlands, there is an increasing stress on the incompatibility of Islam with the secular discourse by some politicians and intellectuals[5], side by side with an impressive increase in scholarly studies of Islamic tradition[6] as well as a number of groups and publications aiming at the reading of the Qur'an in dialogue with Muslims.[7] A comparable production of texts about the Bible from Muslim opinion leaders and scholars does not as yet exist, a fact that may be attributed to the relatively recent arrival of Muslims in Dutch society.

In Indonesia, these three strands of reading also occur. Here, the practice of reading Scriptures or telling stories derived from the diverse religious traditions is stronger than in the Netherlands. In everyday praxis, people of Christian and Muslim background in some parts of Indonesia do share a common heritage of storytelling and arts, where among other resources textual references to the Qur'an and the Bible play a part. So, there may by intercultural and intertextual readings, which are not explicitly perceived as interreligious readings.

As authors of the articles in this part of the book, we all are positioning ourselves within either the Christian or the Muslim community. This does not mean that we are not in conversation with colleagues who are looking at Islam or Christianity from an outsider position. Some of their comments and findings have been very helpful for us. As readers of our own Scripture, we are 'insiders', but not uncritical or unreflecting insiders. Likewise, we want to be participant observers in the tradition of the other. That is to say, we take our position at the boundaries between both the Muslim and the Christian traditions, and are ready to open ourselves up for a respectful conversation with the insiders of another religious tradition. We are aware of the real and enduring differences between our traditions. We hope that we can learn new things from our conversation partners from the other side. We want in particular to learn from each other's Scriptures. In short: we are scholars who want to read in an interreligious way.

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[5] The name of politician Geert Wilders comes to mind, but also influential Arabist Hans Janssen, *Islam voor varkens, apen, ezels en andere beesten* [Islam for pigs, apes and other beasts], Amsterdam 2008.

[6] For instance, GHA Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition. Studies in Chronology, Provenance and Authorship of Early Hadith*, Cambridge 1983.

[7] Two important Dutch authors contributing to the movement of interreligious reading of the Quran are Anton Wessels and Karel Steenbrink.

2. Hermeneutics

We can distinguish between different reader strategies in interreligious reading of the Qur'an by Christians, or the Bible by Muslims. Sometimes, the appropriation of a Scripture by readers from another religious community is aiming rather naïvely at the discovery of a common ground in the existence of similar terms and figures. The Qur'an and the Bible both speak of God, Peace, Justice etc. In the Qur'an and in the Bible, names of people like Musa/Moses, Ibrahim/Abraham and Isa/Jesus occur. So Christianity (and Judaism) and Islam are more or less the same thing! In our experiences of interreligious encounter, there are sometimes flashes of recognition, of the possibility to translate concepts from one religious tradition in terms of the other. There are however, also experiences of estrangement and deep difference, and these experiences should not be ignored. We like to assume that there are indeed enduring differences, both between the texts and the diverse hermeneutical traditions.

Yet, in spite of these differences, there is the intriguing given of the common origin of the Jewish, the Christian and the Islamic faith communities. A common origin for which there is space in Islamic theology, but less so within the other two traditions. So, a part of the job of theologians engaged in the practice of interreligious reading will have to be the opening up of theological space for the religious other, without succumbing to the theological temptation to equalize what is deeply and enduringly different in the other tradition. Much work has been done the last decade on the topic of interreligious hermeneutics.[8]

In the present-day situation, the term 'hermeneutics' is often associated with a certain Western praxis. This obscures the fact that in both the Christian and the Islamic tradition, there has always been a need to interpret the text in new contexts. In classical Tafsir, the context of the early Meccan and Medinan society was reconstructed in order to know in what culture the Qur'an was revealed. Likewise, Christian theologians gathered knowledge about the community into which the biblical stories were first passed on.

The traditional Islamic system of *tafsir* employs very sophisticated forms of hermeneutics. These are not always employed, however, in the modern Islamic approach to the Qur'an. Also, they need to be

[8] Cf. Catherine Cornille and Christopher Conway (eds), *Interreligious Hermeneutics*, Eugene 2010.

expanded in order to do justice to the present-day context. Stella van de Wetering is reading some difficult texts as a Muslim woman, bringing in both her knowledge of traditional exegesis and her context as a modern Dutch Muslim woman. She does not use extra-Islamic sources, but she does question the well-worn ways to deal with certain prescriptive texts from the Qur'an. She shows that, when Muslims are not critical about their own hermeneutical tradition, their words and acts can run counter to the original intention of the text.

As Christian and Muslim students in Indonesia share the study of hermeneutics, they become aware of the tendency in both their communities to fix the interpretation of Scripture in traditional categories, so that new questions cannot be asked of the text. If this is the case, there may be a danger that the meaning of the text cannot become part of us and our world.

Sahiron Syamsuddin, who in cooperation with Robert Setio has introduced a shared course in hermeneutics for Christian and Muslim students in Indonesia, gives some insight into the discoveries such a mixed group will make when they enter into a dialogue on hermeneutics.

3. Strategies in interreligious reading

Starting from the assumed commonalities and differences between both Scriptures, the theologian engaged in interreligious reading could go different ways. Variant possibilities are: the study of the shared historical sources[9], study of shared narratives[10], comparative theology where symbolic concepts of one tradition are used to clarify and modify another tradition[11], or forms of 'scriptural reasoning' where the same is done with texts.[12]

Dorothea Erbele-Küster and Robert Setio are two Christian biblical scholars who make reflective use of Islamic sources in order to enter into a textual dialogue between the biblical and the Qur'anic narrative. They deal with the same complex of biblical narrations, i e.

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[9] Cf. Angelica Neuwirth et al. (eds), *The Qur'ān in Context. Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur'ānic Milieu*, Leiden 2010.

[10] Cf. Martha Frederiks, *Vorstinnen, verleidsters en vriendinnen van God. Islamitische verhalen over vrouwen in Bijbel en Koran* [Princesses, Seductresses and Friends of God. On women in the Quran and the Bible]. Zoetermeer 2010.

[11] Cf. Francis X. Clooney, *Divine Mother, Blessed Mother: Hindu Goddesses and the Virgin Mary*, New York 2004.

[12] http://www.scripturalreasoning.org, consulted 11/03/13.

the story of Abraham/Ibrahim, Sara, Hagar/Hajar and their sons Isaac and Ishmael. Narratives often contain conflicts. They show the multi-fold perspectives of moral dilemmas with which we as present-day readers identify. They may, if analyzed and retold in a skilful way, save us from falling into all-too-easy identifications with the protagonists in the story. All readers and listeners want to identify with the heroic forefathers and foremothers. But does not the story tell us also about the negative sides that their lives carried with them? By using the Qur'anic material as a counter-reading of the well-known and well-worn interpretations of the stories, the authors present them to Christian readers in a new light. And maybe, they manage to do so as well for Muslim readers.

4. From narrative to praxis

Interreligious reading is by no means only an academic exercise. Both in the Netherlands and in Indonesia, there is already a greater audience sharing the resources of both religions in their daily life. In Indonesia, much of the culture is colored by Islamic, pre-Islamic and sometimes Christian elements. In the Netherlands, contacts between groups of Christians and Muslims are sometimes leading to a shared study of Scriptural texts. Gé Speelman shares the results of two meetings of dialogue groups from the Netherlands that read Scripture in an interreligious manner.

These groups could be classified into four categories:

1. Story-centred groups
2. Community-centred groups
3. Daily life-centred groups
4. Topic-centred groups

What are the reading strategies used in these groups and what can we learn from them about interreligious hermeneutics in practice? One of the outcomes of the meeting is that the central interest of the group is decisive for the use of texts. Interreligious reading in these groups is not an academic exercise, but an existential experience, steered as much by group dynamics as by hermeneutical considerations. Or, in other words, group dynamics often direct the hermeneutics used.

A Gender Critical Approach to Islamic Theology and Dialogue. The Case of Slander (*Qadhf*) and Rape

Stella el Bouayadi - van de Wetering

Since I wrote my master's thesis at the end of the nineteen-seventies, the subject of the so called Qur'anic punishments (*ḥudūd*, sing. *ḥadd*), which are part of the Islamic Penal Code, has preoccupied me. These punishments are medieval on the one hand; they resemble the punishments of the Old Testament, like an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. On the other hand they are mostly based on Qur'anic texts, that are for Muslims the Divine Revelation or the Word of God. The Qur'an is considered Holy and unassailable and the Qur'anic rules and punishments are also considered as such.[1]

As a Dutch Muslim and an expert on Arabic language and Islamic Studies, I look for opportunities to discuss this topic with Muslims as well as non-Muslims. With Muslims because the Qur'anic texts on which the punishments are based are less evident than they seem to be. Eventually it is important to look at the correct interpretation of the Qur'anic texts in interaction with texts of the prophetic tradition (*ḥadīth*) and the reason or occasion of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*). With non-Muslims, because as a Dutch Muslim I am aware of the fact that the often incorrect ways the Islamic punishments are implemented in a small number of Islamic states – the greater part of the Islamic

[1] The Qur'anic punishments (*ḥudūd*, sing. *ḥadd*) are confined to the punishments that are mentioned in the Qur'an i.e.: murder, theft, adultery, slander, drunkenness, apostasy and uprising against the state. Of these the punishment for apostasy and uprisings against the state is not mentioned clearly in the Qur'an. All other crimes and punishments under penal law fall under the principle of ta'zīr (chastisement), which means that they are the responsibility of the lawful ruler of the state and can differ by circumstances and place.

states don't apply the Islamic Penal Code – harm the image of Islam and Muslims in the West. Neither are most non-Muslims aware of the precise meaning the Qur'anic texts have for Muslims and of the way Islamic scholars (*fuqahā'*) have used those texts to build a large system of Islamic rules that influence many spheres of life. These rules range from the way a Muslim should perform his or her daily prayer to the way the Islamic state should collect its taxes.

Because non-Muslims are mostly unaware of the real meaning of the system of moral codes called 'sharia' by Muslims, they look at many non-Islamic or even anti-Islamic traditions and customs in the world and consider them as Islamic, not hindered by any knowledge about the issue. One can compare such an attitude with somebody who would see the fact that the death penalty is applied in the U.S. as a result of Christianity.

In the following paper I want to try, however, to discuss texts from the Qur'an, the prophetic tradition (*ḥadīth*) and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) on the topic of slander (*qadhf*) from a gender critical approach for a public of Muslim as well as non-Muslim readers.

The problem that occurs here is that texts that were originally meant to protect women from unjust accusations are interpreted in such a way that they became a hindrance for women. It became very difficult to accuse the aggressor when women were victims of rape or abuse. In this article, I will give a comprehensive explanation of the original texts, how they were interpreted and inserted in the Islamic jurisdiction as it developed through centuries and how they became a hindrance for women who are victims of rape even today.

1. Slander (*qadhf*) in the sources of Islamic theology

There are two reasons why I have chosen the subject of slander (*qadhf*). The first reason is, because it is a topic that gives a clear insight into how the Islamic 'penal code' has developed through centuries from the first events in the days of the prophet Muhammad (s)[2] until the development of a comprehensive system of Islamic legal rules. This system covers all aspects of daily life, including rules involving major crimes and their punishment. Another reason is that it shows how the female perspective, which was still important at the

[2] The (s) stands for: ṣallā 'llahu 'alayhi wa sallam (May God bless him and give him peace). This is what Muslims habitually say after mentioning the prophet.

time of revelation of the Qur'an verses on the topic, disappeared soon after.

In the following paragraph I will present the texts of the Qur'an and *ḥadīth* on slander and the way slander was dealt with during the lifetime of the prophet and afterwards. It will become clear that texts that were originally meant to protect honorable women against slander soon were used to protect men also and finally became a hindrance for women who were victims of rape.

In the end, I will show that Qur'anic penalties are seldom applied and why this is the case, but that the penalty on slander still is a hindrance for women who are victims of rape or abuse.

The most important Qur'anic text revealing slander as a crime that deserves punishment is:

> Those who accuse chaste women, then cannot bring four witnesses, whip them eighty lashes, and do not ever accept their testimony. For these are the immoral (Sura, 24:4).[3]

From this text it becomes clear that the crime of slander (*qadhf*) concerns accusing honorable women (*muḥṣanāt*) without any legal proof. Later on in Islamic jurisprudence, slander was clearly defined as follows: accusing a person (*muḥṣan*) of prohibited sexual intercourse (*zinā*). The word *muḥṣan* is used here because the above-mentioned Qur'an verse points to *muḥṣanāt*, i.e., chaste women. The translation of this word means literally women that protect their chastity. This word is derived from the verb '*ahsana*' which means: 'to make inaccessible, to fortify' i.e. the woman who protects herself from penetration.

In later Islamic jurisprudence the term *muḥṣan* is also used for an adult person, Muslim and free, who has consummated sexual intercourse in a previous legal relation, but in the case of slander, it is used in its first meaning: i.e. an adult Muslim person in possession of his full mental capabilities, so that nobody would expect him to be guilty of prohibited sexual intercourse. The crime of prohibited sexual intercourse (*zinā*) is defined in Islamic jurisprudence as follows:

The act of a man having sexual intercourse with a woman who does not belong to him in any legal way. At least this is the definition according to the Hanafite, Malikite and Shafi'ite school of law. According to the Hanbalite school it also concerns other prohibited sexu-

[3] For the translation of the Qur'an I have used several translations and added my own translation if necessary.

al deeds apart from having sexual intercourse.[4] The Qur'anic punishment on prohibited sexual intercourse is one hundred lashes according to Sura 24:2.[5]

The first thing to bear in mind is that the punishment on slander is almost as great as the punishment on sexual intercourse. Many readers would be tempted to focus only on the impact of this kind of physical punishment that is quite unusual in our era but I want to draw attention to something else. Let us look instead into the consequence of those two mentioned punishments. The Qur'an condemns both crimes prohibited sexual intercourse as well as slander. Both are obviously, from a Qur'anic perspective, blameworthy and should be prevented. At the same time we see that the punishment for prohibited sexual intercourse will in many cases be blocked by the punishment for slander for how can someone be accused of illegal sexual intercourse without the person who witnessed it incurring the risk of being accused of slander? – unless the witness has irrefutable external proof of what he or she saw, or if a woman comes forward with a confession in free will and on her own initiative. This rule applies especially where it concerns slander against women.[6] It shows that the Sura on slander

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[4] Abdullah al-Bashārī, *Dirāsāt qānūniyya: turuq thubūt al-zinā al-mūjab li 'l-hadd shar'an* [trans. Juridical studies: ways of proving *zinā* that requires the Qur'anic punishment according to the shari'a], University of Benghazi 1975, 448. J.P.M. Mensing, *De bepaalde straffen in het Hanbalietische recht* [trans. The confined punishments in Hanbali law], Leiden 1936, 18.

[5] In the *hadīth* and the *fiqh* we also find stoning as a punishment for an adulterer who is married or was married before. In some accounts of *hadīth* a person is mentioned who will come from his/ her own accord to the prophet (s) and then confesses four times on his / her own initiative that he / she has committed adultery (*zinā*) and at the same time asks the prophet to purify him/ her (by applying the penalty). The prophet at first tries four times to deny this person and finally asks him / her whether he / she is fully aware of his/ her confession and has really committed the things he / she says to have committed. When the person persists in his/ her confession, the prophet gives the order to have the person stoned (Muslim, *kitāb al-ḥudūd*, 4205). Some scholars say that the texts in the Qur'an about the punishment of whipping for prohibited sexual intercourse have abrogated the practice of stoning, a practice originally applied in Judaism. Most scholars however say that this practice was also applied after the revelation of the verse on prohibited sexual intercourse in the era of the prophet, as well as afterwards in the era of the successors of the prophet (*al-khulafā al-rāshidīn*) and that is why it should be applied also nowadays. Their opinion is that the text of the Qur'an does not automatically abrogate the text of the *hadīth*, because they consider both sources equivalent in Islam. The Qur'an is the revelation, God's Word to the prophet and the *hadīth* reflects the sunna (tradition), the words and deeds of the prophet who was under God's guidance. (*'Abdu 'r-raḥmān al-Jazayrī, Kitābu 'l-fiqh 'alā 'l-madhāhibi 'l-arba'a* [trans. The book of *fiqh* according to the four Islamic schools of law] part V. Iḥyā'u 'l-Turāthi 'l-'Arabī, Beirut, Lebanon, 1392 A.H. [= 1972/3 A.D.], 58-69).

[6] An exception to this rule is made in Qur'an 24: 6-9 as to slander (*qadhf*) when a husband accuses his own wife of adultery. In that case li'ān is applied. This means that the husband

only mentions slander against chaste women (*muḥṣanāt*). Women are of course extra vulnerable as regards to slander, especially in cultures where the good name and fame of the family depends traditionally on the chastity of the women. The Islamic scholars (*fuqahā'*) of all schools of Islamic jurisprudence, however, punished slander (*qadhf*) in the same way when men were accused of prohibited sexual intercourse without legal proof. That is because the punishment for prohibited sexual intercourse was considered so severe (in some cases even the death penalty[7]), that they considered the slander of men just as serious. So they applied the principle of *qiyās*, reasoning from analogy in a situation that cannot be found literally in the text of the main Islamic sources (Qur'an and *ḥadīth*), but that can be compared to another situation. They concluded that men as well as women can be victims of slander in a very painful manner.

2. Rape as a Case Study

The above-mentioned reasoning, which led to applying reasoning from analogy in the case of men accused of prohibited sexual intercourse, seems to be logical and sound enough. But it leads to a problem in the case of rape. The problem the victim of rape faces is then how she can raise a complaint against her aggressor without facing the risk of being convicted for the crime of slander. In many cases of rape it is after all very difficult to bring legal evidence (i.e. four eyewitnesses).[8]

Of course a woman that is the victim of rape can never be condemned for prohibited sexual intercourse in Islamic jurisprudence, because she is the victim of forced sexual intercourse. So even if she confesses that forced sexual intercourse took place, she will not be convicted and it will have no negative consequences on her behalf. When she, however, accuses the aggressor and he denies it, she will be asked to bring four eyewitnesses who have seen the rape happening with their own eyes and when she fails she will be considered guilty of slander and can thus be punished with eighty lashes. Of course in a case of rape it will be generally impossible to find four eyewitnesses.

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swears four oaths by God, that he speaks the truth and a fifth oath that God may curse him when he is lying. The wife than can invalidate his oath by swearing four oaths that he is lying and a fifth that God's anger may come over her if he was speaking the truth.

[7] See note 4 above.

[8] Of course the same occurs when a man is the victim of sexual abuse or rape. It will be however very rare that a woman is the aggressor.

Unfortunately, this is not only a hypothetical event. Since western colonization and influence in the 19th and 20th centuries in most Islamic countries, Qur'anic punishment has been officially abandoned, but since the 1970s, we have also witnessed a revival of Islamic movements and a revival of Qur'anic punishments in some Islamic countries like Pakistan, Iran, Libya, Sudan and Nigeria. In Sudan the above-mentioned theme prompted a coalition of nine social organizations under the name *Coalition 149*. This coalition demanded that the definition of prohibited sexual intercourse (*zinā*) in the law be separated from the crime of rape as it is mentioned in article 149 of the Sudanese Penal Code, because of the confusion that occurs when this article is intermingled with the Qur'anic laws of punishment for *zinā* and *qadhf* (slander).[9]

When the victim does not succeed in proving the rape, she will be condemned either because of *zinā* or of *qadhf*.

3. A Gender Critical Approach

Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) is a legal science, which covers a large domain, is quite detailed and discusses all kinds of practical situations. So also in the case of slander (*qadhf*), there are all kinds of exceptions. In the *fiqh* books of the four legal schools we find circumstances in which *qadhf* will not be punished. In some cases *qadhf* is actually obligatory (*wājib*) instead of forbidden (*ḥarām*).

So I supposed the above-mentioned problem of slander in case of rape would be described somewhere as an exception in the *fiqh* books. I have consulted several books, but did not find any reference to the victim of rape and how to act when she wants to lodge a complaint against the aggressor.

What can be the reason for the absence of discussion in this case? Could it be that the men who have worked on Islamic jurisprudence did not feel the above-mentioned example of rape and how to press charges against the aggressor without being accused of slander to be a real problem? Didn't the *fuqahā* who are all men see this as an omission? Is not rape of any importance for them as far as the perspective of the victim is concerned?

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[9] http://www.peacewomen.org/news_article.php?id=2257&type=news The crime of rape in Sudan and the silence about it in law!! 31 oktober 2010 http://www.refugeesinternational.org /blog/sudan-women-E2-80-99s-groups-advocate-rape-law-reform Women's groups advocate for rape law reform 2013.

In addition, the texts explaining the Libyan laws of the revival of the Qur'anic punishments (*ḥudūd*) in 1972 do not mention any exception as to the punishment for slander in the case of rape.[10] The fact that I did not succeed in finding any texts that made an exception in the case of rape is strange especially in the light of the clear intentions of both the Qur'anic texts as well as the *ḥadīth* texts, where the punishment for *qadhf* is exclusively applied to the case of slander against women. This would lead the reader to assume that the Qur'an and the *ḥadīth* have a clear preference for the protection of the most vulnerable party, i.e., women.

We see an example of this in the following *ḥadīth* text:

> And the Messenger (s) said: "Whoever performs the five prayers and avoids the seven great sins, will be called on the Day of Judgment to enter Paradise from whatever entrance/ gate he wants" And he mentioned the slander of chaste women and it is also reported that he has said: "The slander (*qadhf*) of chaste women has invalidated the deeds of 100 years."[11]

Qur'an Suras that forbid the slander of honorable women are the above mentioned Sura 24:4 but also the Sura 4:11-23.

> Those who slander honorable, innocent, believing women are cursed in this life and in the Hereafter. They will have a terrible punishment. (Sura 24:23)

The last Sura are revealed as a result of the so-called *Ifk* incident. In this incident Aisha the wife of the prophet (s) was accused of adultery.

What happened was that Aisha was accompanying the prophet during the expedition against the Bani al Mustaliq. She was travelling in a sedan chair atop a camel. The chair was veiled by curtains. When they stopped for a rest Aisha left the chair to answer the call of nature. Afterwards she discovered that her necklace made of shells was gone. She went to search for it. but when she came back the group had left without her. They had lifted the sedan chair onto the camel without noticing that she was not in it. She decided to wait until they would miss her and come back to search. Instead however. Safwan the son of Mu'aṭṭal al-Salmi found her at that spot. He had followed the group from a distance for security reasons. He took her with him on his

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[10] Mohammed Sami an-Nahrawi. *Dirāsāt qānūniyya: al-qadhf almu'āqab 'alayhi ḥaddan* (trans. Juridical studies: slander (*qadhf*). which must be punished by Qur'anic punishment). University of Benghazi 1975. Libya: the General People Comité for Justice. The principle of legitimacy according to the sharī'a of the crimes to be punished by a Qur'anic punishment 2010.

[11] Op. cit., 269.

mount to catch up with the group. But then the gossip started. Some people suggested that something had happened between Aisha and Safwan. Because Aisha became ill when she arrived in Medina, she had not heard of the gossip around her and the prophet did not tell her. She noticed however that his attitude towards her had cooled. When somebody told her about the gossip, her illness increased and she asked the prophet for permission to go to her parents. She hoped in that way to find out more about what was being said of her. Aisha was desperate until finally the revelation of Sura 24:11-23 was sent down and this was proof of her innocence. According to the famous Qur'an exegete Ibn Kathir from the 14th century we can find the following *ḥadīth* about this incident in the collection of Ibn Hanbal.

> While we were in that state, the Messenger of God came in, greeted us and sat down. He had never sat with me since the rumors began, and a month had passed by without any revelation coming to him concerning my case. The Messenger of God recited the creed (*shahāda*) when he sat down, then he said: "Thereafter, O 'Ā'isha, I have been told such and such a thing about you, and if you are innocent, then God will reveal your innocence, but if you have committed a sin, then seek God's forgiveness and turn in repentance to Him, for when a servant confesses his sin and repents to God, He accepts his repentance."

When the Messenger of God finished what he had to say, my tears stopped completely and I not longer felt even one drop. Then I said to my father, 'Answer the Messenger of God on my behalf.' He said, 'I do not know what I should say to the Messenger of God.'

> So I said to my mother, 'Answer the Messenger of God on my behalf.' She said, 'I do not know what I should say to the Messenger of God.'
> So even though I was just a young girl who had not memorized much of the Qur'an, I said:
> 'By God, I know that you have heard so much of this story that it has become planted in your minds and you believe it. So now if I tell you that I am innocent – and God knows that I am innocent – you will not believe me: but if I admit something to you – and God knows that I am innocent – you will believe me. By God, I cannot find any example to give you except for that which the Prophet Yusuf's father said,
> (So (for me) patience is most fitting. And it is God Whose help can be sought against that (lie) which you describe). (Sura 12:18)
> Then I turned my face away and lay down on my bed. By God, at that point I knew I was innocent and that God would prove my innocence because I was innocent, but by God, I did not think that God would reveal Qur'an that would be forever recited concerning my situation, because I thought of myself as too insignificant for God to reveal anything concerning me. But I hoped that the Messenger of God would see a dream in which God would

> prove my innocence. By God, the Messenger of God did not move from where he was sitting and no one left the house before God sent down revelation to His Prophet, and he was overtaken by the state that always overtook him when the revelation came upon him, until drops of sweat like pearls would run down him, even on a winter's day; this was because of the heaviness of the words which were being revealed to him. When that state passed – and the Messenger of God was smiling – the first thing he said was, Be glad O `Ā'isha, God has declared your innocence.
> My mother said to me, 'Get up and go to him. 'I said, 'By God, I will not go to him and I will not give praise to anyone except God, may He be glorified, for He is the One Who has proven my innocence.'[12]

In this story we see something of the love of Aisha for the prophet but also her sincerity and spirituality. Her trust is in God and she defends herself against the wicked gossip as well as against the lack of trust of the prophet and her own parents.

Both the Qur'anic text and the *ḥadīth* narrative above show that the perspective of women can be found in the Qur'an as well as in the *ḥadīth*. In the above-mentioned revelation (24: 11-23) it is again made clear that slander against innocent honorable women is condemned in a way that cannot be misinterpreted. In all texts of the authentic sources of Islam, i.e., Qur'an and *ḥadīth*, it becomes clear that accusing women of prohibited sexual intercourse (*zinā*) without legal proof is a very serious crime. There is no doubt about it: there is no room for such behavior, let alone that there would be any room for violence and revenge against those women, as is common in some traditional Islamic societies where revenge is practiced to prevent the loss of the family's good reputation. In those societies many women and men become victims of murder because they are suspected of prohibited sexual intercourse. Only too often there is no reason for those suspicions except gossip. In some cases, suspicions are based on reality, but even if this is the case, traditional sources advise that one should keep his or her mouth shut as long as legal proof is lacking. And legal proof consists of the testimony of four eyewitnesses. Some scholars (*fuqahā*) and schools of law don't even accept the pregnancy of an unmarried woman as proof. Didn't Maryam (Maria) in the Qur'an give birth without having had sexual intercourse?

Beside the problem of proving the crime of *zinā*, which is mostly blocked by the punishment of slander, it is not at all encouraged in Islam to confess such a crime publicly. One should rather apply the

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[12] Tafsir ibn Kathir on Sura 24:11.

principle of covering up a sin or misdemeanor as is shown in the following text from a book of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*):

> Islam asks from a Muslim, when he is guilty of great sins, to purify himself from it and show repentance and ask forgiveness from God the Most High and that he should cover himself and not expose his sins by talking about his guilt before the people and announcing the misdemeanor. And it is told about the Messenger (s) that he said: "Oh people, it is time for you to keep away from the boundaries (*ḥudūd*) of God and whoever has done something of these bad deeds let him cover it up with the protection that God gives him, but whoever will show us what he has done, we will apply the [regulations of] God's Book on him."[13]

Because of this text, Muslims are on the one hand encouraged to keep their sins with them and not to come forward with confessions. On the other hand, however, there are also texts in Qur'an and *ḥadīth* with the opposite purpose: i.e., to encourage Muslims to prevent injustice by informing about those crimes, such as doing good deeds and forbidding the bad (*al `amal bi-'l-ma`rūf wa-'l-nahī `an al-munkar*).[14]

Conclusion

So we come to the conclusion that although Qur'anic punishment (*ḥudūd*) often at first sight seems to be severe and medieval in our eyes, in classical texts we see that mercy and forgiveness mostly predominates. It becomes clear that forgiveness and covering up each other's misbehavior is better and that a situation where somebody would be blamed for something he did not commit is terrible and unthinkable.

Finally, in all cases of Qur'anic punishment the principle stands that any doubt (*shubha*) will avert punishment. This means that in the case of the slightest doubt whether somebody is or is not guilty, the punishment (*ḥadd*) should not be applied. The result is that Qur'anic punishment is very rarely practiced.

It appears that when one explores the existing texts on *zinā* and *qadhf* in Qur'an exegesis (*tafsīr*) and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh)* one

[13] `Abdu 'r-Raḥmān al-Jazayrī. *Kitābu 'l-fiqh `alā 'l-madhāhibi 'l-arba`ā* (trans. The book of *fiqh* according to the four Islamic schools of law) part V. Iḥyā'u 'l-Turāthi 'l-`Arabī. Beirut, Lebanon 1392 A.H. (= 1972/3 A.D.). 129. The *ḥadīth* cannot be found in the six most appreciated *ḥadīth* collections.

[14] Michael Cook. *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought*. Cambridge 2001.

is confronted with references to the purposes of the shari`a[15] (*al-maqāṣid al-shar`iyya*). These purposes or intentions can be seen as the original juridical principles behind the texts of the *fiqh*. The above-mentioned purposes are: protection of the soul, religion, the intellect, possessions and honor. In penal law protection of the victim as well as protection of the perpetrator is at stake. So according to the purposes of the shari`a it is important to practice the utmost constraint when regulations cannot guarantee justice to the individual.

Some scholars speak of 'the Shari`a' as the revealed law. They want to say that Islamic Jurisprudence is the outcome of the study of Islamic Scriptures, based on revelation: Qur'an and *ḥadīth*. The Qur'an is considered by Muslims to be the revealed Word of God, and therefore universally valid and applicable. But this revelation in Arabic should at least be understandable to the inhabitants of Mecca and Medina and the rest of the Arabian Peninsula in the beginning of the 6th century CE. It was revealed in a certain specific time and place. That is why in tafsīr (exegesis) it is necessary to take into account the language as it was understood in those days as well as the reason why certain Sura were revealed. So we can say that even the Qur'an cannot be free from contextual influences, let alone the *ḥadīth* that evokes questions like: How authentic is a specific tradition? Does it really contain the words of the prophet (s) literally, and if it does in what circumstances has the prophet said those words?

That is to say that in Divine Revelation there are always many contextual factors playing a role. The task of the exegete (*mufassir*) is then to scrutinize the texts to find the Divine Message they contain, a Message that can in our days be so precious and important, without being led astray by the opinion of former scholars who have interpreted the texts taking into account their own context and age and their own gender perspective as men. In our present-day context a gender critical approach is needed, because it becomes clear from the study on the subject of slander (*qadhf*), that the perspective of masculine scholars does not automatically include the feminine perspective.

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[15] Shari`a stands for the Islamic law that is based on the main Islamic sources Qur'an and *ḥadīth*. Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) is the discipline that is used to obtain the right regulations from those sources.

In Search of the Integration of Hermeneutics and 'Ulum al-Qur'an

Sahiron Syamsuddin

One of the controversial issues in the field of the interpretation of the Qur'an is whether hermeneutics that is used for the interpretation of the Bible can be used for the interpretation of the Qur'an. Some Muslim scholars point out that it is impossible, or even not allowed for Muslims, to interpret the Qur'an using hermeneutical methods. The most famous reason for this is that hermeneutics does not match with the nature of the Qur'an. Some others tend to see that it can be included into the 'Sciences of the Qur'an (*'ulum al-Qur'an*). They argue that through it one can even improve the discipline. This essay will show that some hermeneutical theories accord with the Qur'an interpretation and therefore should be part of the *'ulum al-Qur'an.* Before mentioning these theories, it would helpful be to give some reasons why we need hermeneutics.

1. Hermeneutics

First of all, in terms of the definition of hermeneutics (in a broad sense) in the Western tradition of thinking, we find four terms that are related to each other: *Hermeneuse*, hermeneutics (in a sense), philosophical hermeneutics and hermeneutical philosophy. Ben Vedder defines in his work the term *Hermeneuse* as "*die inhaltliche Erklärung oder Interpretation eines Textes, Kunstwerkes oder des Verhaltens einer Person*" (interpretation of a text, arts or behavior of a person).[1]

[1] Ben Vedder. *Was ist Hermeneutik? Ein Weg von der Textdeutung zur Interpretation der Wirklichkeit*. Stuttgart 2000. 9. Cf. also Matthias Jung. *Hermeneutik zur Einführung*. Hamburg 2001. 19-23.

According to this definition, the term refers to the practice of explaining all things that can be or must be interpreted. It does not refer to any exegetical methods. The field that speaks of certain exegetical methods for the purpose of getting 'correct' and deep understanding of an object is called "hermeneutics".[2] In "philosophical hermeneutics", the exegetical methods are not given much importance. Rather the concern is with things that can be regarded as foundations and requirements of interpretation and its methods. Thus, its core is to search for conditions that pave the way for interpretation.[3] Hermeneutical philosophy is meant to be a philosophical branch that deals with interpretation, in which human beings are considered first and foremost as "exegetical beings". It mostly discusses epistemological, ontological, ethical and aesthetic aspects of human beings.[4]

If we look at the Islamic tradition related to interpretation (i.e. *'ulum al-Qur'an*), we will find that out of the four hermeneutical terms and fields only two terms, namely *Hermeneuse* and hermeneutics in the sense of methodical procedures, are given enough attention by Muslim scholars from different countries and periods. In terms of *Hermeneuse*, or *tafsir/ta'wil* in Arabic, they have produced a huge number of *tafsir*-works, such as *Jami' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an* (by at-Tabari), *Mafatih al-Ghayb* (by Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi), *al-Manar* (by 'Abduh and Rashid Rida) and *Tafsir al-Mishbah* (by Quraish Shihab). Some works that are not intentionally dedicated purely to the interpretation of the Qur'an, but consist of the interpretation of several Qur'anic Sura also belong to this field. Sermons in mosques and other places, in which preachers quote and explain the meaning of Qur'anic Sura, belong to *Hermeneuse* as well. In short, all exegetical practices can be included in this term. As in relation to *Hermeneuse,* Muslims have a long tradition of Qur'anic hermeneutics. This can be seen from the fact that many scholars (*'ulama*) have written so many books on methods of interpreting the Qur'an, such as *al-Burhan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an* (by az-Zarkashi), *al-Itqan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an* (as-Suyuti), *al-Fawz al-Kabir fi Usul at-Tafsir* (ad-Dihlawi), *Mabahith fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an* (as-Subhi) etc. However, it seems that their exegetical methods would not be

[2] Cf. Vedder. *Was ist Hermeneutik*, 9f.; Jung. *Hermeneutik zur Einführung*. 9. On page 20 Jung defines hermeneutics as *Methodenlehre der sachgerechten Auslegung* [method of correct interpretation].

[3] Cf. Vedder, *Was ist Hermeneutik?*, 10f.; Jung. *Hermeneutik zur Einführung*, 21f.

[4] Vedder, *Was ist Hermeneutik?*, 11.

approved by the majority of Muslim scholars in the contemporary period, in which Western scholars have deep experience in hermeneutical methods in interpreting texts, methods which are seen to be more appropriate to modernity and modern civilization. Only a few Muslim scholars, such as Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd,[5] Muhammad Talbi[6] and Abdullah Saeed,[7] are eager to develop the Qur'anic hermeneutics by adopting some hermeneutical methods embeded in the Western tradition in order to respond to contemporary challenges.

Unlike *Hermeneuse* and Qur'anic hermeneutics, philosophical hermeneutics and hermeneutical philosophy have not yet received enough attention from Muslim scholars. On the contrary, Western experts in hermeneutics are very familiar with these two fields. I believe that the embryos of philosophical hermeneutics and hermeneutical philosophy were already proposed by Muslim philosophers and scholars in the past. However, these have not been approved by later generations of Muslim scholars. In order to develop Islamic theories of interpretation, Muslims have to search for what Muslim philosophers and scholars proposed in this field and to learn from Western hermeneutics. This article, however, will focus on what Muslims can learn from Western hermeneutics.

2. Muslim Thinkers and Hermeneutics

As stated above, few Muslim thinkers are interested in integrating hermeneutical theories in a broad sense to the *'ulum al-Qur'an,* insofar as they accord with the nature of the Qur'an as divine revelation. This has been deemed acceptable for several reasons. First, Muslim scholars have adopted knowledge from other cultures in the past. Such philosophers and theologians as al-Kindi, al-Farabi and Ibn Rushd learnt Greek philosophy, Indo-Persian sciences and technology. Thank to this openness, they were able to establish 'advanced' Islamic civilization. Second, hermeneutics and *'ulum al-Qur'an* have the same object, i.e., text. Third, many hermeneutical theories may strengthen what is found in the *'ulum al-Qur'an.* Fourth, through hermeneutics (in a broad sense), the *'ulum al-Qur'an* can be developed in a more sophisticated way, especially if the field of *'ulum al-Qur'an* is combined with philosophical hermeneutics and hermeneutical philosophy.

[5] Cf. Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, *Ishkaliyyat al-Qira'a wa Aliyyat at-Ta'wil.*
[6] Cf. Muhammad Talbi, *'Iyal Allah.* Tunis 1992.
[7] Cf. Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an.* London and New York 2006.

In this way it will not only represent a pedagogic knowledge of the interpretative strategies, but also become stronger and more advanced due to philosophical thoughts. Fifth, combining exegetical methods found in the *'ulum al-Qur'an* and those in hermeneutics will result in an interpretative product more appropriate to contemporary needs.

3. Text and Context: Jorge J. E. Gracia

Although the usage of hermeneutics in the interpretation of the Qur'an is plausible, it does not mean that all hermeneutical theories can be applied. One should search for some theories that are in accordance with the nature of the Qur'an as divine revelation. One theory that does not accord with its nature is, for example, that one should go into the psyche of the author in order to understand the text he composed correctly. It is impossible to apply Friedrich Schleiermacher's theory to the Qur'an, because its author is Allah and no one can go into His psyche.

However, there are many applicable theories. Here I would like to give two examples: Jorge J. E. Gracia's and Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics. Gracia builds a quite comprehensive concept of hermeneutics. In his book, *Theory of Textuality*, he discusses the fundamental issues of hermeneutics. He begins his book by proposing the nature of text, which is the object of his hermeneutics. Then he goes on to explore a theory of understanding before focusing on the nature and method of interpretation. In this article, I explore in outline his theories of interpretation and to what extent they can be used for developing Qur'anic hermeneutics.

Gracia defines a text as a historical entity, in that it is produced by the author or emerges in a certain time and place for a certain purpose. Thus, it is always part of the past, and when we interact with it, one must play the historian's role and try to 'enter into' the past. The problem that arises is that the interpreter does not have direct access to the meaning of the text. The interpreter only has access to the entities used by the author of a text in conveying certain message or meaning. So, discovering historical meaning is a fundamental problem in hermeneutics. Gracia tries to propose a solution to this hermeneutical problem by "the development of textual interpretation" whose aim is to bridge the gap between the situation in which a text was produced and the contemporary one in which an interpreter tries to discover the

meaning of a historical text. Before elaborating his thoughts more deeply, view on the nature of interpretation is first explained here.

Gracia explains that "interpretation" is an English term from the Latin "*interpretatio*" derived from the verb *interpres* which etymologically means "to spread abroad". He asserts that the word *interpres* also means an agent between two parties, a broker or negotiator, and an explainer, expounder and translator. The Latin term *interpretatio* has at least three possible meanings: (1) "meaning", so that to give interpretation to something is equivalent to giving the meaning of whatever is being interpreted, (2) "translation" (a translation of a text from a certain language to another), and (3) "explanation" and by this he means that an interpretation strives to bring out what is hidden and unclear, to make plain what is irregular, and to provide an account of something or other.[8] Gracia realizes that the object of interpretation is essentially not only a text, but also facts, behavior, people and even the world. He asserts however that the hermeneutics he constructs in his two major books is a textual hermeneutics, in which the terminological meaning of interpretation is as follows.

Gracia states that terminologically, interpretation can be given a tripartite definition. *First*, an interpretation is the same thing as an understanding one has of the meaning of a text.[9] In this case, he refers to, for example, Hirsch.[10] In some cases, understanding is indeed only one, for example: 2+2=4. However, in many cases, interpretation is indicated by two things:

(1) a certain interpretation is not the only possible and valid understanding of a text, and (2) the interpreter's subjectivity plays a significant role in interpretation.[11] With regard to to this matter, Gracia states that the truth of interpretation can be plural. *Second*, an interpretation is a process or activity whereby one develops an understanding of a text. In this meaning, an interpretation involves decoding the text to understand its meaning; this understanding cannot be identical with the meaning itself.[12] *Third*, an interpretation refers to texts which in-

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[8] Cf. Jorge J. E. Gracia, *A Theory of Textuality: the Logic and Epistemology*, Albany 1995, 147.

[9] Gracia, A *Theory of Textuality*, 148.

[10] Cf. Eric Donald Hirsch, Jr., "Three Dimensions of Hermeneutics," in: *New Literary History* 3, 1972, 246.

[11] Cf. Gracia, *A Theory of Textuality*, 148. Cf. also Ernst Konrad Specht, Literary-Critical Interpretation – Psychoanalytical Interpretation, in: John M. Conolly and Thomas Keutner (eds), *Hermeneutics versus Science? Three German Views*, Notre Dame 1988, 154.

[12] Gracia, *A Theory of Textuality*, 148.

volve the three things, (1) *interpretandum* (the text being interpreted), (2) the interpreter, and (3) *interpretans* (the commentary added to it). *Interpretandum* is a historical text, while *interpretans* is the commentary added by the interpreter, so that *interpretandum* is more easily understood.[13] Thus, interpretation consists of both of *interpretandum* and *interpretans*.

According to Gracia, the general function of interpretation is 'to create in the contemporary audiences' mind understanding to the text being interpreted'. He divides this into three specific functions, i.e. historical function, meaning function and implicative function. First, an interpretation functions to produce in the contemporary audience an understanding of the author and of historical audiences of a text. This is the historical function. The second function is to produce in the contemporary audience an understanding, by which they can understand the meaning of the text, whether or not this is the meaning intended by the author or historical audiences or not. The third function is to produce an understanding so that contemporary audiences can understand the implication of the meaning of the text being interpreted.[14]

As previously stated, each interpretation, according to Gracia, must contain information/explanation added to the *interpretandum*. It then brings out what Gracia called the 'interpreter's dilemma', especially as related to the function of historical interpretation. On the one hand, the additional commentary indicates the distortion of the text being interpreted, and on the other, without *interpretans*, the interpretation may not be able to allow contemporary audiences to understand the text being interpreted, for there are cultural and time distances between them and the text. To solve this problem or dilemma, Gracia proposes 'the Principle of Proportional Understanding'. This principle requires that the interpretation must firstly produce objective meaning. Gracia argues that the understanding contemporary audiences gain through interpretation must be similar to that of the author of the text and the historical audiences. Thus, the main aim of interpretation is:

To create a text that produces in the audience (the contemporary audience) acts of understandings that are intentionally the same as

[13] Op. cit., 148f. The concept of differentiation between understanding and making understandable found also in Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics*, 96. This differention is rejected by Hans Georg Gadamer *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. edition, New York 2004, 274.
[14] Cf. Gracia, *A Theory of Textuality*, 155-164.

those produced by the historical text in the historical author and the historical audience of the historical text.[15]

Furthermore, an interpreter has the right to develop understanding as the continuation of objective understanding, so that the text being interpreted has significance for and is applied in accordance with the time and place in which it is interpreted. It is this development of the meaning to which Gracia refers by the meaning and implicative function.

Gracia then divides the interpretation into two categories: (1) textual interpretation, and (2) non-textual interpretation. Whether an interpretation is classified under the first or second of these depends on the aim of interpretation. Gracia observed that:

> A textual interpretation is precisely the sort of interpretation we have been discussing in this chapter. It is an interpretation of a text that adds to the text whatever is thought by the interpreter to be necessary to get certain results in contemporary minds in relation to the text, when those results are taken in one of three ways: First, as the re-creation of the acts of understanding of the historical author and the historical audience, that is, as the understanding of the meaning the historical author and the historical audience had; second, as the production of acts of understanding whereby the meaning of the text, regardless of what the historical author and historical audience thought, is understood by the contemporary audience; and third, as the production of acts of understanding whereby the implications of the meaning of the text are understood by the contemporary audience.[16]

The definition above shows that textual interpretation is an effort to grasp the meaning of the text being interpreted (*interpretandum*). On the basis of the reality of interpretation, textual interpretation aims to grasp the original or historical meaning of *interpretandum,* as intended by the author and the historical audiences, to produce a new meaning by the interpreter, assuming that the interpreter has a role in producing the meaning for the context in which the text is interpreted, and to grasp the implications of a text. Gracia's exploration of the three interpretative functions and result of interpretation here does not relate to the concept of interpretive truth, but merely to the reality of interpretation.

As for the second type of interpretation, i.e., non-textual interpretation, his definition is, "it is one that, although it may be based on a textual interpretation, has something else as its primary aim even if

[15] Gracia, *A Theory of Textuality*, 157.
[16] Op. cit., 164.

such an aim involves or is a kind of understanding."[17] To him, this non-textual interpretation does not function or aim to reveal the meaning of the text or the implications of the meaning of the text, as is intended by the textual interpretation, but to reveal what lies beyond the textual meaning. According to Gracia, in its broad meaning, historical interpretation, in which an interpreter tries to add some historical accounts that are not mentioned in the text under interpretation, is one example of non-textual interpretation. Historical interpretation does not only interact with the meaning and implications of the text being interpreted, or in Amin al-Khulli's terms "*ma fi n-nass* (what is inside the text), but also reveals and explains "*ma hawla n-nass* (what is surrounding the text).[18] It is interesting to consider Gracia's statement that:

> The ultimate aim of the historian is to produce an account of the past and that account includes not only textual interpretations, but also the reconstruction of the larger context in which the text was produced, the ideas that the historical author did not put down in writing or express in speech, the relations among various texts from the same author and from other authors, the causal connections among texts, and so on.[19]

In sum, the historical interpretation and other non-textual interpretations, such as psychological, philosophical, legal, scientific, literary and inspirational interpretations, aim to produce understanding which involves not only the text being interpreted, its meaning and implication, but also its relation to others.

When we carefully look at the theory of the nature of interpretation proposed by Gracia, we will come to the conclusion that interpretation, textual or non-textual, is composed of some other information that is added to the authorial meaning. This is closely related to the theory of interpretive truth.

For Garcia, the truth value of interpretation can be plural. The questions arising are what interpretive truth is and whether it is possible to say that an interpretation is correct or incorrect, true or false. He insists that it is not easy to determine the truth value of an interpretation, especially textual interpretation, for, as it has been mentioned above, it has three functions. Someone who conducts a historical interpretation claims that her or his interpretation is true, for he or she

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[17] Op. cit., 164f.

[18] Cf. Amin al-Khuli, *Manahij Tajdid fi n-Nahw wa-l-Balaghah wa-t-Tafsir wa-l-Adab*. Kairo 1961, 312-317.

[19] Gracia, *A Theory of Textuality*, 165.

has produced in contemporary audiences an understanding that is the same as what was understood and intended by the author of a text being interpreted. One who focuses on the meaning function states that his or her interpretation is true, for he or she succeeds in producing in contemporary audiences an understanding of the "significance" of a text being interpreted for the contemporary period. Meanwhile, when the interpreter produces an interpretation stressing the implicative function, he or she considers his or her interpretation as true, because it produces an understanding of the implications of the text's meaning for contemporary audiences. Accordingly, Gracia says that determining whether an interpretation is correct or false is irrelevant. What is relevant is to say that such interpretation is more effective or less effective, more appropriate or less appropriate.[20] The relativity of exegetical truth here does not tend to 'negative relativity', unlimited relativity. This relativity of truth does not mean that everybody is allowed to interpret a text on the basis of his or her own will or subjectivity, in an unlimited way. An interpreter who wants to discover the original or historical meaning of a text should analyze the language used at the time in which it emerged and pay attention to its historical context. Moreover, when one is willing to extend the interpretation into its meaning and implications, he or she is subject to certain rules, so that his or her explanation retains a close connection to the original meaning.

On the basis of the nature and reality of interpretation explained above, Gracia argues that interpretive truth is not monolithic, but plural. The plurality of interpretive truth is not only related to non-literal interpretation in which an interpreter has more roles in determining the meaning, but also to textual interpretation. The meaning and implication functions of interpretation admit interpretive differences among interpreters due to the diversity of their horizons. Gracia gives the example that, in the reality of interpretation, Aristotle's works have been interpreted by many people. In this case, Gracia agrees with Immanuel Kant, who argues that we will never reach the 'final and definitive descriptions in science and philosophy.'[21] This statement is in line with the view of Issa J. Boullata, an emeritus professor at McGill University, when he describes reality in the Qur'anic interpretation. He says, "Meaning has been shown to depend on so many ele-

[20] Op. cit., 173.
[21] Op. cit., 168f.

ments in the text and its context, as well as in the relationship of both to other texts and contexts, that a single interpretation can no longer be considered to be sufficient or claim finality for itself."[22] Jane D. McAuliffe says, "No exegetical agenda is ever finally fixed. The last word has yet to be spoken."[23]

The plurality of textual interpretation does not mean that interpretive truth is relative and unlimited, or in Gracia's term, 'infinitive regress', for each interpretation must contain *interpretandum* (the text being interpreted) and *interpretans* (additional commentary which is still related to *interpretandum*),[24] in which the additional commentary depends on many factors, such as the expertise of the interpreter and his or her background and experience. Neither does it mean that all interpretations are true, in the sense that an interpreter interprets merely as he or she wishes. An interpretation will be considered true as long as the additional commentary (1) explains the intention of the text being interpreted, and (2) is not contrary in principle to what is intended by the text.

That an interpretation must be composed of *interpretandum* and *interpretans* indicates that for Gracia, it must contain objectivity and subjectivity at the same time. This raises the question of to what extent the subjectivity of an interpreter and the objectivity of *interpretandum* play a significant role in an interpretation. On that basis, an interpretation will be considered highly subjective if an interpreter pays little attention to the role in determining a text's meaning played by the language of the text being interpreted and its historical factors. An interpretation is regarded as highly objective, if in the interpretation *interpretandum* and other factors determining the historical meaning of the text become the interpreter's priority.[25]

4. Gracia's Hermeneutics and 'Ulum al-Qur'an

Understanding Gracia's hermeneutical theory and method, I will prove in what follows that his thought is beneficial for the development of the 'Qur'anic sciences' (*'ulum al-Qur'an*) as well as for exegetical activity. I also want to show the significance of the integration

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[22] Issa J. Boullata, Introduction, in: Issa J. Boullata (ed.), *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'an*. Richmond 2000, xi.
[23] Jane D. McAuliffe, *Qur'anic Christians: an Analysis of Classical and Modern Exegesis* Cambridge 1991, 292.
[24] Gracia, *A Theory of Textuality*, 171.
[25] Op. cit., 174.

between Gracia's hermeneutics and *Ulum al-Qur'an.* In this regard, this integration has at least two benefits: (1) the possibility of developing a philosophical theory of Qur'an interpretation, and (2) the strengthening of interpretation ethics.

I acknowledge that it is difficult to find philosophical works on '*ulum al-Qur'an* in the Islamic world; one can find only a few works that discuss it. On the other hand, philosophical hermeneutics, a branch of general hermeneutics that discusses fundamental issues related to interpretive activity (*tafsir, exegesis, Auslegung*; *Hermeneuse*) and the method of interpretation, has rapidly developed in the West. Such works as *Truth and Method* by Hans Georg Gadamer and *A Theory of Interpretation* by Gracia are just two examples. Further, Western scholars, such as Heidegger in his *Sein und Zeit*, have achieved what they called hermeneutical philosophy.

The small number of such works in the Islamic world is partly due to a pragmatic factor, in the sense that '*ulum al-Qur'an* is merely viewed as the pedagogical aspect of the field of Qur'anic interpretation, which accommodates only what is applicable in interpretive practice. Scholars of '*ulum al-Qur'an* do not consider the addition of philosophical aspects to this methodical one important. Philosophical hermeneutics, however, has been found in embryonic form in some classical works in Islamic history, such as *Qanun al-Ta'wil* by al-Ghazali and *Fashl al-Maqal* by Ibn Rusyd. Nowadays, some works of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, Hasan Hanafi and Muhammed Abid al-Jabiri can be classified as works on '*ulum al-Qur'an,* which have philosophical characteristics. This model needs to be developed.

To develop '*ulum al-Qur'an*, Muslim scholars need to study the thinking of some Muslim scholars in the past as well as by scholars of hermeneutics of the Western tradition. Attention to hermeneutical thought from the Islamic tradition is needed, for in addition to the fact that one would find the embryonic form of such philosophical hermeneutics, this thought is rooted in the same, or similar, theological tradition. The 'necessity' of taking into account Western thought in this field is based on the fact that contemporary scholars of hermeneutics in the West have succeeded in achieving a huge number of hermeneutical theories. Moreover, they have come to what they call hermeneutical philosophy. These are expected to strengthen the position of '*ulum al-Qur'an* in the future.

One example of how some aspects of '*ulum al-Qur'an* can be developed concerns with the definition of the term *tafsir*. In the books

of the discipline, the term *tafsir,* which etymologically means *kasyf* (to reveal) and *bayan* (to explain), is defined as: "*fahm kitab Allah al-munazzal 'ala nabiyyihi Muhammad wa-bayan ma'anihi wa-istikhraj ahkamihi wa-hikamihi*"[26] (to understand the book of God, to explain its meaning and to extract its laws and wisdom). The above-mentioned definition of *tafsir* proposed by Badr al-Din al-Zarkashi shows us three substantial activities in the interpretation of the Qur'an, i.e., (1) to understand (*fahm, verstehen*), (2) to explain (*bayan, erklaeren*) and (3) to extract (*istikhraj, extrahieren*). These three components have essentially covered substantial matters in the activity of interpretation. However, they are not explained in a sophisticated way. The question of 'what is the distinction' between these three words is not found in the work of al-Zarkashi. Probably, he wanted to let his readers to check them in other works. However, without direct explanation, readers may not realize the significant distinctions among of them. It is clear that Gracia's exploration of the nature of understanding and interpretation (including the definition and functions of interpretation) could complete the explanation of the definition of *tafsir*. Gracia explores the term 'understanding' deeply. He says: "Understanding is not, however, the same as meaning. Understanding is a kind of mental act whereby one grasps something, which in the case of texts is their meaning."[27] Understanding is a mental act, an effort to grasp the meaning of the text. Thus, understanding is psychological and personal, in the sense that it is in the interpreter's mind before he or she expresses it publicly, in a written or oral form.

Bayan (explanation) is the continuation of *fahm* (understanding). After an understanding of a text emerges in the interpreter's mind or soul, he or she continues another activity, i.e., to explain the meaning of the text by analyzing possible aspects that are related to it, such as linguistic and literary aspects, in order to deliver its message to the public in written or oral form. This activity is called in Arabic *bayan*. Unfortunately, al-Zarkasyi does not deeply explore the term *bayan* in his definition of *tafsir*. Perhaps he had his reasons for this. Therefore, it becomes the responsibility of contemporary scholars to complete. The theory of the function of interpretation, especially the historical and meaning functions, can help us to explain the form of *bayan*. Likewise, the concept *istikhraj ahkamihi wa-hikamihi* can be elaborat-

[26] Badr al-Din al-Zarkasyi, *al-Burhan fi 'Ulum al-Qur'an*, Cairo n.d., 1:13.
[27] Gracia, *A Theory of Textuality*, 103.

ed by the term 'implicative function of interpretation'. In sum, there should be such explanation of the definition of *tafsir* in the Islamic tradition, for it really helps readers to understand its aspects. Yet, it is difficult to find them in the works of *'ulum al-Qur'an*. By integrating hermeneutical theory, in this case the theory of Gracia, into the Islamic tradition, we can construct a more sophisticated and deeper definition of *tafsir*.

The second benefit of the integration of hermeneutics into the *'ulum al-Qur'an* is that it may develop the ethics of interpretation. For example, such theories as those of pluralistic truth, diversity of interpretative functions and subjectivity-objectivity in interpretation can play an important role in avoiding the truth claim. Recently, fundamentalist groups have emerged in many places in the Islamic world. They consider their own interpretation of religious texts as the only true interpretation. This kind of view and attitude is contrary to the ethics of interpretation, which says that an interpreter should not claim that his or her interpretation is the only true interpretation, for in fact there are many factors which limit an interpreter's quest for the sole exegetical truth. Practically, some earlier scholars provided lessons to help us overcome the truth claim these groups make. Al-Imam al-Syafi'i, for example, said: "What I think is true, but it is possibly false, while what others think is false, but it may also be true". His statement indicates that he did not regard himself as the most correct. Mutual respect among scholars of Islamic law, *sufis*, and Muslim philosophers in the past also showed clearly that they followed the correct ethics of interpretation. Such ethics should continue to be strengthened and developed in the current situation, so that we have tolerant attitudes towards different interpretations.

5. Gadamer and Ulum al-Qur'an

Another example of hermeneutical theories that might develop *'ulum al-Qur'an* is that of Hans-Georg Gadamer. He proposes the theories of 'historically effected awareness',[28] 'pre-understanding',[29] 'fusion of horizons'[30] and 'application'.[31] In short, we can say that, according to these theories, everyone has his/her own horizon of understanding

[28] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer Philosophischen Hermeneutik*. Tübingen 1986, 306f.

[29] Gadamer, *Das Problem des historischen Bewusstseins*. Tübingen 2001, 5.

[30] Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, 367.

[31] Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, 313; Idem., *Text and Interpretation*, 393f.

which results from the historical situations in which s/he lives. This horizon creates pre-understanding, through which s/he can understand a text and 'dialogue' with it. However, this pre-understanding should not be imposed on his/her understanding of the text and cause misunderstanding. Rather, s/he should let the text speak to him/her. He should also be aware that the text has its own horizon. So, if one interprets a text from the past, he must consider its historicity, meaning that he must look at its historical situation. In this case, both horizons have their own position and must be fused in the process of understanding. Awareness of the historicity of a text can prevent interpreters from misunderstanding it. Thus, the pre-understanding of the interpreter and his/her contemporary horizons of understanding could impose on the interpretation without any proper reflection. This was already emphasized by Gadamer:

> Das [d.h. den Text zu verstehen] bedeutet aber, dass die eigenen Gedanken des Interpreten in die Wiedererweckung des Textsinnes immer schon mit eingegangen sind. Insofern ist der eigene Horizont des Interpreten bestimmend, aber auch er nicht wie ein eigener Standpunkt, den man festhält oder durchsetzt, sondern mehr wie eine Meinung und Möglichkeit, die man ins Spiel bringt und aufs Spiel setzt und die mit dazu hilft, sich wahrhaft anzuzeigen, was in dem Texte gesagt ist.[32]

The interpretation of a text, Gadamer argues, is like a conversation in which an interviewer tries to understand those who are being interviewed: "Die Auslegung ist wie das Gespräch ein durch die Dialektik von Frage und Antwort geschlossener Kreis"[33] (the interpretation is like the conversation through the dialectic of question and answer closed circle). This comparison aims to avoid any misunderstanding of what someone says or what a text means. In conversation, this avoidance is easier than that in the interpretation of a text, but the hermeneutical mechanism is the same. The task of an interpreter resembles the task of a journalist: to get true information about what happened and what someone said. In other words, the first task of interpretation is to find out the original historical meaning that is in fact something fixed and immutable. The other task of interpretation is to explain how the Qur'an can be of importance for Muslims living in the moment of

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[32] It [i.e. to understand the text], however, means that the thoughts of the interpreter are always brought in in the reawakening of the meaning of the text. To this extent, the horizon of the interpreter could be influential, but it is not like a specific position that must be enforced firmly; it is rather an opinion and a possibility that one brings into play, and through its help, it is truly shown what is said or meant in the texts. See Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, 392.

[33] Ibid.

interpretation (i.e. in the present and future), in which the challenges and situations are or will be different from those at the time of the revelation.

In terms of religious and moral texts that should be implemented in life, Gadamer adds the theory that these texts should be reinterpreted by paying more attention to their main messages ("meaningful sense", *sinngemäß*), not to their literal meaning. This represents balanced hermeneutics that gives a fair position to the objectivity of the text and the subjectivity of the interpreter. To my mind, these theories are very suitable for interpretation of the Qur'an. They accord, for example, with the theories of *asbab an-nuzul* (occasions of revelation), *naskh* (abrogation), *makki-madani* (Meccan and Medinan revelation), etc. Through hermeneutical explanation these theories of *'ulum al-Qur'an* may even become more 'elegant' and reasonable.

Reading My Neighbor's Scripture

Robert Setio

The relationship between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia has never been constant. There were times and places where it was permeated with tension, misunderstandings, dislike and even conflict. However, there were also times and places where a harmonious relationship, a willingness to cooperate and the sense of being fellow-citizens grew. A portrait of Muslim-Christian relations that exposes only one side is obviously not representing the whole reality, and may well be suspected of a hidden political agenda. All in all, an imbalanced description will result in a misleading view of Indonesia, especially among outsiders. It only shows either that Muslims and Christians in Indonesia never get along well or that they live harmoniously without any problem whatsoever. To avoid such a misleading impression, information on the relationship between Muslims and Christians in Indonesia should equally expose the two sides.

That either overt or covert conflicts often take place among Muslims and Christians in Indonesia is hard to deny. But, at the same time there is also an increase in cooperative activities. These activities increasingly lead to reflections on the similarities and differences they find in the teachings of their religions. No less worth mentioning is that dialogue activities have become more evident in some regions, including the regions that have just experienced conflict and those that still bear the trauma of the conflict.

One of the dialogical activities that this article wants to specifically highlight is the joint reading of Scriptures. In this activity, Christians undertake a Qur'anic reading whereas Muslims read a portion of the Bible. In Yogyakarta, and maybe in some other places too, some

students from Islamic and Christian universities constitute a dialogue group in which one of the activities they perform is the shared reading of both the Qur'an and the Bible interchangeably.[1] What was once just taken for granted – that the scriptures have overlapping stories – is now put into deliberate consideration. It is not surprising that whatever they find through such an activity will bring new insights in their own tradition as well as enlightening them in the faith of the other tradition. My own experience as a lecturer in a course on hermeneutics that I co-teach with Sahiron Syamsuddin, a lecturer from Kalijaga Islamic State University, is another example of how reading the Qur'an and the Bible together by Muslims and Christians (in our class the students are a mix of Muslims and Christians from a few countries) promises a widening of horizons as well as more in depth understanding not only of the other scripture, but, also of one's own scripture.[2]

In the same line of argument we can nowadays find more reflections on Easter or Christmas written by a Muslim as well as a meditation on Eid al-Fitr or Eid al-Adha by a writer from the Christian tradition appearing in national newspapers. In the past, when the relations between Muslims and Christians were even better, such an occurrence could hardly be found, if at all.[3] This means that in the midst of the worsening of the relations between Muslims and Christians, people feel more encouraged to learn about the other religion. There is also more openness to discuss what would otherwise be a delicate issue and even to exhibit it in the public arena as shown by the articles in the newspapers. This irony should be understood as a sign of hope for religious harmony (especially between Muslims and Christians) in Indonesia, without closing the eyes to the fact that religious fanaticism is also increasing.

1. Reading the Neighbor's Scripture

Reading the neighbor's Scripture (a metaphor for reading a Scripture of the other religious tradition) is one of a few models of dialogue. "Reading" here is taken to mean a process of interpretation or appro-

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[1] For example, Sekolah Lintas Iman (SLI) [Inter-faith school] run by Kalijaga Islamic State University, Duta Wacana Christian University, Faculty of Theology Weda Bhakti (Catholic) and DIAN Interfidei, Yogyakarta.

[2] A course offered by Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies (ICRS), Yogyakarta.

[3] The change has occured since the end of 1990s, following the demise of Soeharto's 32-year reign.

priation of a text (Paul Ricoeur).[4] Reading the neighbor's Scripture has its own strength that is likely not shared by other models of dialogue. Both Muslims and Christians view Scripture as God's revelation (whatever the understanding of the revelation), on which their beliefs rest. Scripture is presumed to be the main source of teachings, ethics and rituals. Therefore, Islam and Christianity are justly called 'Religions of the Book'. As Scripture plays a very important role, Muslims and Christians would justifiably guard it at all cost. They would make sure that the Scripture they adore above anything else is not mistreated, especially by those who do not belong to their tradition. Because of this attitude, reading the neighbor's Scripture becomes a very sensitive issue. Offense may easily be given over this issue as some real cases – such as an explosion of riots following a supposedly disrespectful treatment of the Qur'an by non-Muslims in Indonesia and elsewhere – prove.[5]

Thus, we can conclude that on the one hand, reading the other's Scripture is a very delicate problem, but, on the other hand, it has an enormous capacity to substantially reduce alienation between Muslims and Christians. For a willingness to read the other Scripture is already an important step, showing that one is capable of overcoming the feeling of strangeness – that he/she is not used to it – which could have permeated his thought all along. On the other hand, by allowing another person to read one's own Scripture, one is already able to do away with any suspicion that the Scripture one reveres is going to be misused. Allowing the other the right to interpret one's own Scripture, also shows courage in taking the risk that one's Scripture will be used in a way one has never known. When barriers and suspicions are overcome, the reading of one's neighbor's Scripture can be expected to bring people to a deeper understanding of the other religion. Discussions on fundamental issues will likely unfold along the way. The

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[4] Paul Ricoeur, *From Text to Action. Essays in Hermeneutics*, II, Evanston Illinois 1991, 118f.

[5] For example, the case of US troops at Bagram military base Afghanistan who burned discarded copies of the Qur'an that had been used by Taliban prisoners to write messages to each other in February 2012 fueled anger among Muslims all over the world. A similar anger also occured when Terry Jones, an American pastor of the Christian Dove World Outreach Center in Gainesville, Florida announced that he would burn 200 Qur'ans on the 2010 anniversary of the September 11 attack. But, Qur'an burning in "Pesantren (Islamic boarding school) Buntet", Cirebon, Indonesia, which takes place every now and then, especially on the days approaching Eid al-Fitr, causes no fury. This proves that not every Qur'an burning will immediately provoke Muslims.

success of the reading of the neighbor's Scripture promises indeed to improve the quality of Muslim-Christian dialogue.

This article shows one way among many of reading the neighbor's scripture. In this attempt I, as a Christian, want to read a passage from the Qur'an. But, before doing so, I need to emphasize what is possible and impossible for me in doing so. As a non-Muslim, I need to admit that in relation to the Qur'an I am only an outsider. As an outsider, I will see the Qur'an, albeit clearly an important 'classic', a text that changed the world, as not having direct revelatory value for me as a non-Muslim. It should be clear, however, that by taking that position I do not have any intention to look down on the Qur'an. On the contrary, what I am going to do is motivated by my willingness to appreciate the Qur'an and to treat the Qur'an with respect. However, no matter how great my respect for the Qur'an is, I am profoundly aware that my reading is not going to match that of a Muslim. If I claim that I can match Muslims' readings, I would be lying and I would be arrogant. Therefore, in this case, in all honesty it is better to locate myself outside the Muslim tradition.

Unlike the Muslim tradition that understands the Qur'an only in its Arabic version, I will use the Qur'an in its English translation. In the Islamic view, the translated Qur'an is seen as less valuable than the Arabic version. Any translation of the Qur'an is regarded merely as an interpretation and given a secondary status. I surely appreciate this view and am ready to accept criticism if my reading, which is taken from the translated version of the Qur'an, is considered rather inappropriate. However, I will try my best to understand the Qur'an, even though only through its translation.

The exercise of reading of any text at all can hardly be done without certain apriori knowledge. It is impossible for a reader to come to a text without any presuppositions if s/he wants to get something out of it. Moreover, if a reader gains some understanding from a particular text, he/she cannot claim that what he/she gets purely comes from the text. Any understanding derived from a text is only possible with some involvement of the reader's thought. Starting from these presuppositions, I need to admit that the way I read the Qur'an is never neutral. My familiarity with the Bible and with the world of biblical studies will lead me to read the Qur'an in my own way, both as a Christian and a biblical scholar. As such, I realize that the result of my reading will be very different from readings available in Islamic tradition. Therefore, I do not intend to claim that my reading is an Islamic as-

sessment, or, for that matter, expect my Muslim counterparts to readily accept my reading. However, I also do not want to be trapped in relativism, in the attitude of "my reading is for me, others' reading is for them". This attitude would only fail to benefit the effort to build a good relationship between Muslims and Christians. More than that, such a form of relativism would also close any possibility of discovering similarities among people of different backgrounds. Instead, I rather open myself to the possibility that my reading may in one way or another overlap with Islamic understanding. However, it is not up to me to decide whether this is true. Let Muslims judge to what extent my reading is similar or different from theirs. Furthermore, in this attempt I will not read the Qur'anic Sura in isolation. I will consult some readings from within Islamic tradition. In this case, I choose contemporary readings of some Indonesian Islamic scholars. These contemporary readings, which are mostly in the form of sermons, undoubtedly represent the traditional view, but, interestingly enough they also contain a number of contextual and updated struggles of present life in Indonesia. It can clearly be shown how Muslims in Indonesia are unhesitatingly involved in secular affairs.

I have already mentioned my profession as a lecturer in biblical interpretation. In relation to this profession, I need to reflect on the fact that I have been trained to employ historical-critical methods in interpreting the Bible. These methods lead us to see the present text as the result of a long historical process that must be looked into closely, in order to obtain the right understanding. The basic philosophy of this method, one can say, is that knowledge of history judges the aptness of an interpretation. It is also important that the originality of a text is taken as the highest priority. The task of interpretation is to seek what was the original or the source of the present text. If this method were to be applied for the text of Qur'an, then, the question would obviously be: "where does the Qur'anic text come from?" If, in fact, some texts from the Qur'an were to have originated from other former texts, as a source of information, the final version of the Qur'an cannot be accepted without looking into its source. At least, there needs to be an effort to compare which texts precede and which texts are later additions; which texts 'borrow' their content and which ones 'lend' it. Similarly to the efforts above, the issue of for what community and in what context the texts in the Qur'an were written as well as how loyal or deviating the final texts are as compared to their source, are ques-

tions that need to be raised when people read texts like the Qur'an from historical point of view.

Although I am aware that my training would direct me to take such a course of inquiry, I would rather seek another course here. In the latest development of biblical studies, historical criticism is only one among several other methods. There is a model of interpretation that is gaining more proponents nowadays, especially in Asia, that is, a pragmatist interpretation that takes the readers with all their specific struggles as the focal point. The main question underlying this type of research is how one understanding of a text occurs and what are the factors that make such an understanding occur. This paradigm does not concern the origin of the texts, or at least it does not make it the main concern, as long as it is not related to the issue of hermeneutics. I prefer to follow this trend. By adopting the pragmatic paradigm, I am reasonably able to treat the Qur'an as it is without bothering myself with the question of its origin. The historical endeavor of historical-critical scholars to find the *Ur-text* has contributed to the polemical problem of legitimacy as Judaism, Christianity and Islam each lay equal claim to being the religion that uses the original text as its scripture. To me such a polemic is unnecessary. I do not want waste my time on it. I agree with the opinion of Vernon Robbins and Gordon Newby:

> It became clear to some that the Qur'an could be viewed as a product of the coparticipation of reading God's Holy Word by Jews, Christians, and Muslims. From this perspective, the polemical interpretations of the "borrowing/lending" metaphor as well as the reductionist search for the Ur-text could be replaced by the more generative method of analyzing the rhetorical structures of the Qur'an's readings of God's Holy Word.[6]

Robbins and Newby, along with the other writers of the volume that includes their article, have successfully shown that it is possible to study the Qur'an and the Bible without having recourse to polemics. And not only that it is possible, but that it is also enriching.[7] This richness is impossible to find in the kind of detective study typically implemented by historical-critical scholars. The principle I use is more or less similar to the reading principle of the writer of the anthology published by SBL. We try to see the texts of the Qur'an and the Bible

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[6] Vernon K. Robbins and Gordon D. Newby, A Prolegomenon to the Relation of the Qur'an and the Bible, in: *Bible and Qur'an. Essays in Scriptural Intertextuality*, John C. Reeves (ed.), Atlanta 2003, 25.

[7] Cf. Reeves, Bible and Qur'an.

as a reflection of the tradition that seems to have the same source but actually developed in different directions. The differences will be linked in a dialogical framework, from which the life-world of each tradition appears. Through the inter-tradition dialogue we will get a picture of how each tradition forms its religious ideas that are ever developing, if not changing, and are not finished yet.

On the other hand, as ideologies work, criticism is inevitable. The readers of Scripture are not expected to be passive, to be readers who accept whatever Scripture says. This attitude is not intended as an encouragement to do battle with Scripture. Rather, it is meant as an appreciation of Scripture. The readers have indeed appreciated Scripture by demonstrating their critical attitude. If Scripture reflects the unfinished formation of ideology, readers' critical attitude needs to be seen as their involvement in the ideology formation process. Therefore, Scripture has succeeded in inviting readers to enter the world it is developing. Scripture is no longer a strange ancient book for its modern readers. The distance of the writing of Scripture from the readers seems to dissolve when they are involved in a critical dialogue process with Scripture.

The text I chose for this article is the narrative of the sacrifice of Abraham's son. This story is recorded both in the Qur'an (*As-Sâffât* 37: 102-107) and in the Bible (Genesis 22:1-19). Even though the text is selected only as an example of how interscriptural reading can be conducted, this text also possesses a very special position in both Muslim and Christian tradition. In addition to these two traditions, Jewish tradition puts great value on this story as well, calling it the Aqedah Yitzhak (the Binding of Isaac). The three religions that each see themselves as the successors of Abraham – that is why they are called Abrahamic Religions – regard the sacrifice of Abraham's son as a pillar, or support, of their beliefs. A Jewish scholar, Jon D. Levenson puts it as follows, "Indeed, Abraham is a paradigm of faith in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam alike, and in all three traditions the Aqedah serves as the parade example of the extraordinary depth of his faith".[8]

2. Inter-text and Inter-tradition Dialogue

The story of the sacrifice of Ibrahim's son is written in Sura (*As-Sâffât*) 37: 102-108:

[8] Jon D. Levenson, *Inheriting Abraham, the Legacy of the Patriarch in Judaism, Christianity & Islam*, Princeton and Oxford 2012, 73.

102. And when he attained to working with him, he said: O my son! Surely I have seen in a dream that I should sacrifice you; consider then what you see. He said: O my father! Do what you are commanded; if Allah please, you will find me of the patient ones.
103. So when they both submitted and he threw him down upon his forehead,
104. And We called out to him saying: O Ibrahim!
105. You have indeed shown the truth of the vision; surely thus do we reward the doers of good:
106. Most surely this is a manifest trial.
107. And We ransomed him with a Feat sacrifice.
108. And We perpetuated (praise) to him among the later generations.

If the text is compared to Genesis 22 some differences can be found:

1. The name of Ibrahim's son is not mentioned, unlike in the biblical version
2. Ibrahim asked his son's opinion about the divine command whereas in the Bible the son was brought to the sacrificial altar without prior notice, not to mention being consulted
3. Trial as the ultimate aim of the sacrifice is just revealed later in the text; in Genesis, it is declared very early in the opening part
4. Qur'anic Ibrahim talks a lot while Biblical Abraham is very economical with words. Abraham's reticence has led to many commentaries, contrary to Ibrahim
5. The point of submission is clearly important
6. It is not only Ibrahim who demonstrated submission, but also his son.

In addition to that, if we bring the Eid al-Adha festival into consideration, these points can be mentioned:

1. An offer of animal sacrifice by the ummah is also a form of submission
2. The submission in the form of animal sacrifice becomes a Muslim custom.

In the Qur'an God does not appear directly, but, through a dream that only Ibrahim saw. It was in that dream that Ibrahim learned he had to sacrifice his only son. Upon hearing the command, Ibrahim approached his son who would be the object of the sacrifice. The Bible does not contain this part of the story. Isaac was just asked to follow his father without knowing what was actually going on and what would happen to him when they arrived at the intended place. Ibrahim, on the other hand, not only told his son about the command, but,

alsc let the son express his opinion.[9] The willingness of Ibrahim to discuss the matter with his son is worth noting. We do not know how old Ibrahim's son was. Neither do we know the age of Isaac in the Genesis story. However, the Qur'an gives a hint. It says that the son had reached the stage where he could assist his father with his work, probably as a farmer. That means he was not a child anymore. He could at least be a teenager at the time of the story. As a teenager he could think about the meaning and impact of what his father said. He could also articulate his disagreement if he wanted to. It would be logical if, as the object of sacrifice, he did so. However, strangely enough he did not show any sign of disagreement whatsoever. He was ready to be made the sacrificial object, put on the altar and slain. He promised his father that he would undergo the sacrifice to the end. That means he was ready to take all risk of what might happen without complaining. The Islamic tradition supplies a story about the son's request to his father to tie his hands so that he would not rebel and thwart the sacrifice ritual. The promptness of the son indicates that the sacrifice commanded by God was no longer Ibrahim's problem only but had become the son's problem too. Similarly to Ibrahim, the son was also faced with the challenge of whether he would obey God's difficult command. All difficulty, fear and sorrow felt by Ibrahim was also felt by his son, even more intensely. M. Shahid Alam, a Professor of Economics at Northeastern University, Boston reflects on this point as follows,

> The Qur'anic account of Abraham and Ishmael testifies to its weighty nature. Although he is a minor, Abraham does not make the life or death decision for Ishmael: the onus of that decision is placed firmly in the hands of young Ishmael. Arguably, Abraham could have chosen to ignore Ishmael's wishes because he was following an order from God: what could be more important than submitting to God's command. But he decides otherwise, suggesting that one person cannot sacrifice another's autonomy even when he (she) believes he is following orders from God.[10]

In line with the focus on the son, one may wonder what would be the impact of the fact that his name is not revealed. Unlike in the Qur'an. Islamic tradition recognizes the son as Ishmael. But, the Qur'an itself remains silent as to the identity of the son. In the ensuing Sura of the same Sura (112f.) the name of Isaac is. indeed. mentioned. But, it is

[9] Also in the Jewish tradition Isaac is described as giving his consent to the command of God and the plan of his father to sacrifice him.

[10] His writing is available at http://ssrn.com/abstract=1715104.

impossible to put him as the son to be sacrificed. He was just born after the event of the sacrifice. Isaac is described as the son given to Ibrahim because of his obedience in keeping God's command to sacrifice his son. The different explanation of who the son was has led Muslims and Christians (also Jews) to split. Or, rather the discrepancy is used to underline the split. Ishmael became a symbol of Islam, whereas Isaac is a symbol of Christianity and Judaism. But, that is if the Islamic tradition is taken as the basis. It would be different if the basis were what is revealed, or, rather concealed by the Qur'an. By concealing the name the Qur'an has opened itself to all possibilities. The son can be anybody's. Any son is a possible candidate for the son. Of course, Ibrahim could just have sacrificed a son. But, since he is unnamed, it is, then, not necessary to tie him to a specific figure. On the other hand, the flexibility in the text calls for attention by the readers. An attracted reader could not leave the gap created by the unidentified son without filling it with a particular son, this time no longer Ibrahim's, but theirs. The story is no longer a story of a lofty figure in ancient times, but a contemporary story of a parent that has to sacrifice his child. The command to sacrifice Ibrahim's son is a command to sacrifice everybody's child. The submission demonstrated by Ibrahim and his son is also the submission expected from a reader for whom the story is alive. In that way, Ibrahim and his son have become a universal model of pious humanity.

Universality seems to be a hallmark of the Qur'an. The universality can or should be understood from a scripture that, according to historical chronology, came later than the Jewish and Christian scriptures. Islam's claim upon its existence as a correction to older Abrahamic religions becomes meaningful when it distinguishes itself by making itself a universal representation of religion. The particularity of the two religions that Islam presumes to correct lies with the claim of being "the chosen people". The Jews claim to be the chosen people, likewise the Christians. The Jews' claim takes the physical lineage as evidence. They are descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the flesh. The story of the Aqedah props up the claim of the lineage of Israël. The son asked to be sacrificed was Isaac, as he was the only one who was with Abraham when the command was given. It was only Isaac who was called the son of Abraham. It was Isaac who begot Jacob who was also called Israel (Genesis 32:28). Christians do not deny Isaac as the true son of Abraham, but they made him a prefiguration of Jesus Christ. By then the story of the sacrifice of Abraham's

son was understood in the light of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, the only son of God. By accentuating the Aqedah in the radiance of Jesus Christ, Christians have absorbed the Jewish tradition as well as Genesis 22 into their own tradition. Not only that, a claim based on an allegorical interpretation by the Apostle Paul has also made Isaac a symbol of Christians (Romans 9:7-10; Galatians 4:28-29). Paul has put forward two models of the lineage of Abraham, the one according to the flesh (the Jews), the other according to the spirit (the Christians). But Paul did not seem to render the two models an equal status. Rather he esteemed the spiritual stream more. In this case the influence of Greek dualistic thinking is apparent. Paul, after all, realized that he had to depart from Judaism, a tradition he himself lived for the first part of his life before he set up a new tradition that was later recognized as Christianity. Despite the claim of Paul and other disciples of Jesus, the rest of the Jews remained with the old tradition that acknowledged Abraham as their forefather according to the corporal line. Then, what about the Muslims? As there were two brothers, Islam also has a claim on its sole legitimacy as Ibrahim's heir. It is just that the claim is not associated with lineage. Islam claims to be a genuine descendant of Abraham by deeds, that is, submission to God. In the playful words of H. Ferry Nur: "you should know that Ibrahim is not a Jew, nor a Christian, nor a wicked man, but, he is a muslim who has submitted himself totally to God".[11] Islam, like the meaning of its name, teaches submission that is learned from Ibrahim and used as evidence of the true children of Abraham. The justification through attitude locates Islam as a religion that is open for all. Anyone able to demonstrate true self-submission would merit recognition as a Muslim.

Both the Bible and the Qur'an show that the command given by God to Abraham is a trial. However, they do not unveil the motive in the same location. While the Bible places the motive at the very early stage of the narrative (in verse 1 of Genesis 22:1-19), the Qur'an discloses it only after the sacrifice (verse 106 of Sura 37:102-107). Although the two scriptures do not portray Abraham/Ibrahim as being aware of the trial, the different placement of the disclosure inevitably has a different impact on readers. Possible tension in reading this story

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[11] Ferry Nur, Teladan Nabi Ibrahim [The Model of the Prophet Ibrahim] as Khutbah Idul Adha 1433, http://www.eramuslim.com/peradaban/pemikiran-islam/khutbah-idul-adha-1433-h-ust-ferry-nur-ketua-kispa-teladan-nabi-ibrahim-as.htm#.USbO3KWmgWI. accessed 22/02 /13.

will be reduced if the reader already knows that God's command is only intended as a temptation (as in the biblical version). This means there is less tension in the biblical version than what readers will likely find in the Qur'an. This difference would also influence their sense of the seriousness of the sacrifice. Whether God is seen as really determined about his command depends on whether the readers see the command as a trial or not. In the case of the Qur'an, the readers do not know anything about the trial and would certainly think that the son will unquestionably soon be killed as a sacrificial offering. In the mind of the readers Ibrahim cannot withdraw from the sacrifice willed by God. In fact, God's response as indicated by the Qur'an reinforces this impression. To Abraham God said "you have indeed shown the truth of the vision" (verse 105). In Genesis 22, the angel of God stopped the slaying of Abraham's son with a command: "do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him" (verse 12). The following command that invalidated the first commandment (to kill) does not appear in the Qur'an. Presumably the Qur'an wants to assure that the sacrifice of Ibrahim's son is not going to be reduced by the understanding that it will not really happen. So, even though there is still the temptation motive, the Qur'an does not seem to make it too conspicuous.

The question is, then, why did the Qur'an ever mention the trial? The answer is presumably related to the meaning of trial according to the Qur'an. Trial here is probably not intended as a way to prove something that is still in doubt, as might be commonly understood. Ibrahim was not put on trial because God doubted his obedience. Ibrahim had been introduced as an obedient man (Sura 37:111) at the outset. There are no grounds to challenge the impression that he was faithful all along until the sacrificial event took place. The occurrence of the idea of temptation was apparently just meant to show that the potential already recognized in Ibrahim would be realized in practice. Ibrahim's obedience was not only a hypothetical possibility, but an attestable fact. But the evidence was unlikely to be addressed to God himself. It is rather God who wanted to have it demonstrated to other parties, Ibrahim's contemporaries, as well as to following generations. As is apparent in v. 108, the next generations are the actual target of this proof of obedience. They are the ones who will testify for Ibrahim's virtue, while at the same time they are expected to be inspired by Ibrahim's obedience. Thus, the Qur'an has addressed the controversy over the trial motif of this story. The inclusion of the test at the beginning of the story in the Bible has raised a debate over whether an

omniscient God could not have known what would be the result of his command. Referring to Jewish interpretations on this point Levenson says,

> ...many Jewish exegetes over the centuries have felt compelled to interpret "I know" (*yada'ti*) in verse 12 as if it were a different word, "I have made known" (*hoda'ti / yidda'ti*). But this is not the only place where the description of the personal, dynamic, and feeling God of Israel is not easily reconciled with the perfect, static, and perfectly static God of the philosophers. However the formidable conundrum of divine learning is to be understood philosophically (if at all), the end of our narrative leaves no doubt that God has acquired knowledge he did not have at its outset.[12]

To this debate the Qur'an chooses to explain that the event was just a contest to show yet another evidence of Ibrahim's submission to God. The audience for the contest it imagines to be the umat (believers of) Islam throughout the ages.

3. Eid al-Adha

The actualization of Ibrahim's sacrifice does not only stop with himself. Learning from Ibrahim's experience, Muslims are called to also actualize the sacrifice. which Muslims do every year through the Eid al-Adha celebration, reenacting the sacrifice. Animal sacrifice, such as cows, buffaloes, goats. and sheep is obligatory for those who can afford it.[13] Eid al-Adha sermons in Indonesia repeatedly strive to raise the awareness of the wealthy to willingly share their wealth with those who in need through sharing of sacrificial animals. On similar occasions the wealthy are also reminded that the pleasure of prosperity is actually a temptation. Are they more concerned with material value or with devotion to God who commands them to sacrifice?[14] Satirical allusions to the perpetrators of corruption also appear in these homilies.[15] The corruptors are those who do not practice the true understanding of Eid al-Adha. Their selfishness contradicts the meaning of sacrifice. which is giving and caring for others. In the context of Indonesia. where poverty is evident. the distribution of the sacrificial meat

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[12] Levenson. *Inheriting*. 80.

[13] http://www.analisadaily.com/news/read/2012/10/23/83017/wajib_berkurban_bagi_orang_yang_mampu/#.UP8rQCdJMWI accessed 22/01/13 at 7.19 a.m.

[14] Take for example Ghufron's sermon in http://www.lazuardibirru.org/duniaislam/lembarjumat/idul-kurban-dimensi-vertikal-dan-horisontalnya-bagi-umat-islam/. accessed 22 /01/13 at 7.38 a.m.

[15] Take for example Sarjuni's sermon in http://www.suaramerdeka.com/v1/index.php/read/cetak/2012/10/23/203055/Kurban-dan-Misi-Memerangi-Korupsi. accessed 22/01/13.

is a form of compassionate action for the poor who presumingly cannot afford to buy meat for their meals. The sermons also remind the people that compassion should not be limited to the Eid al-Adha celebration only, but must endure beyond the festival. Eid al-Adha is expected to be a life turning point from caring about oneself to caring about others. It is accepted as a social piety that is just as important as a ritual piety; given the current situation, it is even more relevant.[16]

In the teachings of Islam, Eid al-Adha is a component of the Hajj, which is the fifth pillar of Islam. The Hajj consists of a series of rituals that culminate in Eid al-Adha. Therefore, Eid al-Adha is also known as the feast of Hajj. However, this does not mean that only those in the Hajj who can or must celebrate Eid al-Adha. Muslims who are not present on the pilgrimage also celebrate Eid al-Adha.[17] However, its bond with the Hajj strengthens Eid al-Adha, imbuing it with the value of egalitarianism, since the Hajj teaches that everybody is equal. Differences in social and economic status are reserved in the Hajj, where people wear the same clothes, share a place to stay and perform the rites together. Egalitarianism is a value often underscored in Islam, which uses it as a kind of identity marker. Islam unhesitatingly declares that every human being is equal before God. No one person or group of people enjoy a higher position than others.

If we go back to the obligation to sacrifice in Eid al-Adha, we can see how the sacrifice of Ibrahim's son is not only commemorated (knowledge) but is also reenacted (action). Eid al-Adha is a call to witness to the truth of the sacrifice of Ibrahim's son through a real action. Muslims are challenged to go into Ibrahim's experience; by so doing the sacrifice becomes theirs too. If they find buying the animal *kurban* is not that cheap and the sacrifice creates a certain burden on their shoulders, they must understand that the harder the burden of the sacrifice, the truer it is for them.[18] On the other hand, the greater the willingness to respond to the challenge of sacrifice, the greater the degree of submission to God. Even though Muslims do not have to resort to human sacrifice as in the case of Ibrahim, the challenge remains just as hard. It is true that the offering is just a symbol, nonethe-

[16] Mentioned by some preachers, one of them is Supadiyanto in http://www.pelita.or.id/baca.php?id=60511, accessed 22/01/13.

[17] This differs from the sacrifices conducted by the Jews before the destruction of Jerusalem Temple in 70 CE; at that time the sacrifices were focused on the Temple.

[18] The direction to keep the animal to be sacrificed in the house of the people who will sacrifice it days before the event creates a close relationship between the family and the animal. This closeness will make the sacrifice even harder.

less it does not just dwell in the memory (Christian), but in a real action. The power of symbolic action is much more pronounced than one that relates to memory.

4. Child Sacrifice

No matter how difficult it is to sacrifice an animal, this cannot match the severity of child sacrifice. Child sacrifice has ever been a controversial practice, though its traces have been detected throughout human history. There have been, of course, voices on both sides, both agreeing and disagreeing. The Bible also mentions the controversy: 2 Kings 17:17; 23:10 and Jeremiah 32:35 consider child sacrifice a disgusting practice dedicated to foreign gods. By contrast, Exodus 13:2 mentions a demand to offer the firstborn to Israel's God which, according to this text should include a human firstborn as there is no indication of an alternative.

> Consecrate to me all the firstborn; whatever is the first to open the womb among the Israelites, of human beings and animals, is mine.[19]

The child sacrifice is also crystal clear in the story of Jephthah (Judges 11) where the Israelite leader has to sacrifice his own daughter to fulfill the vow he previously made in order to obtain the blessing of God. The story of the sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22 is similar to the story of Jephthah's daughter in the way that there is a demand to sacrifice a child. But experts tend to see the Bible as standing on a principle of rejecting human sacrifice, at least when the present form of the Bible is taken as the basis of consideration.[20] The replacement of Isaac with a ram confirms the biblical disapproval of human sacrifice. If this is so, the Qur'an, which also mentions the replacement of human sacrifice with animal sacrifice, can be understood as disapproving human sacrifice too.

According to Jon Levenson, the point of Genesis 22 is not on what is being sacrificed, human or animal, but on whether Abraham holds onto the precious things in his life, or willingly gives them to

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[19] Numbers 18:15 contains an additional command to redeem the fisrtborn of human being: "the first issue of the womb of all creatures, human and animal, which is offered to the LORD, shall be yours; but the firstborn of human beings you shall redeem, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem". All biblical quotations are taken from New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

[20] Scholars commonly view Genesis 22 as containing a combination of two scenarios. One scenario ends with the death of Isaac (verse 16 and 19 confirm it), whereas the other scenario (the more dominant one) tells that Isaac was saved.

God.[21] He also objects to the moral judgment – that the story reflects an immorality – as does Immanuel Kant and many other people in this modern world. Levenson also needs to argue against the charge that the story of the sacrifice of Abraham's son has inspired those who sacrifice human beings in the name of God. An example is a scholar who tries to relate the 9/11 tragedy to the sacrifice of Ibrahim's son based on some writings left by one of the terrorists that indicated that he was inspired by the story of the sacrifice of Ibrahim's son.[22] For Levenson, one cannot directly say that the story of the sacrifice of Abraham's son inspires someone to kill others without considering various other factors. Linking the murders committed in the name of religion and the story of the sacrifice of Abraham's son is a very forced interpretation.[23]

Levenson's apology is understandable within the framework of violence directed at others on religious grounds (that the violence was carried out at God's command). For instance, the text has been used to explain the behavior of perpetrators of violence against their own children, as happened in a case in California where a father who had just finished a bible study that discusses Genesis 22 killed his own daughter.[24] The man turned out to be susceptible to disturbances in the brain, and this mental disorder led to his aggressive behavior. In these kinds of cases, it is too simplistic to say that people are driven by the story of the sacrifice of Abraham's son. However, beyond these cases we can also find numerous subtle references in modern times to "child sacrifice".

The recruitment of young people as soldiers, later sent to the battlefield to die in war or to be disabled for the rest of their lives, should be considered as a version of child sacrifice. Noble reasons, such as "to sacrifice for the nation and the country", "to be ready to die for the greater good", and "not to be selfish, but to prioritize others", may hypnotize the young to offer their precious lives. When they die, their death is then recognized as heroic, even as a form of martyrdom. All of those fine depictions should not pass without posing the existential question, why should they be the target? Why should those young souls that have yet to undergo long years of maturation be selected to end in such a sacrifice, however noble it may seem? The answer usu-

[21] Levenson, *Inheriting*, 84.
[22] Op. cit., 108.
[23] Op. cit., 106ff.
[24] Op. cit., 109.

ally given is surely emotionally uplifting: "because they are the best". Young life is indeed the best, no doubt about it, but once it becomes a sacrificial object it no longer means anything. Again and again we meet the same story of child sacrifice even in these times called modern. This is how the sacrifice of Isaac or Ishmael has been made relevant.

Outside the context of war there are several other examples of child sacrifice. In the context of poverty, children are often made the object of exploitation by their neighborhood, or even by their own parents. They have to earn money to support their family. Not infrequently they have to drop out of school to support their family. Their own interests are obviously sidelined. Their future becomes bleak. However, children who willingly help their parents earn praise. Their decision is praised and highly honored. On the other hand, if a child wants to prioritize his / her education or personal interests while their parents need his / her help, this kind of child would be accused as one who does not know how to behave properly. Is not this a kind of child sacrifice, one that strongly reminds us of what happened to Isaac and Ishmael?

Child trafficking often intersects with the business of sex and is yet another example of child sacrifice in a modern society marked by high mobility. It is true that such cases have been declared a crime. Nevertheless, despite the efforts to fight this type of crime it keeps recurring and even increasing. How this could happen without people's consent? Consent is perhaps too strong a word, but ignorance on the part of the community is also a kind of permission. It is precisely because of that ignorance that crimes against children are constantly increasing both in quantity and in quality.[25] Indeed, there are many factors that cause cases of child abuse, but the main thing is the basic worldview that sees a child as a worthy sacrifice in service to selfish desires. Again, we find a similarity with that of our main story.

In Asia, with its impressive economic growth, the younger generation does not seem to be as independent as it may look. Trends govern the lives of many Asian youth. In the field of education, they are dictated to by the current dominant discourse that the only reason to go to school is to get a job. At the level of higher education, they are made

[25] National Committee of Protection of Children (Indonesia) reported the increase in the amount of violence toward children starting from 2009 (1.552 cases). 2010 (2.335 cases) to 2011 (2.508 cases), cited from http://indonesia.ucanews.com/2012/10/17/kasus-kekerasan-terhadap-anak-terus-meningkat/, accessed 23/01/13.

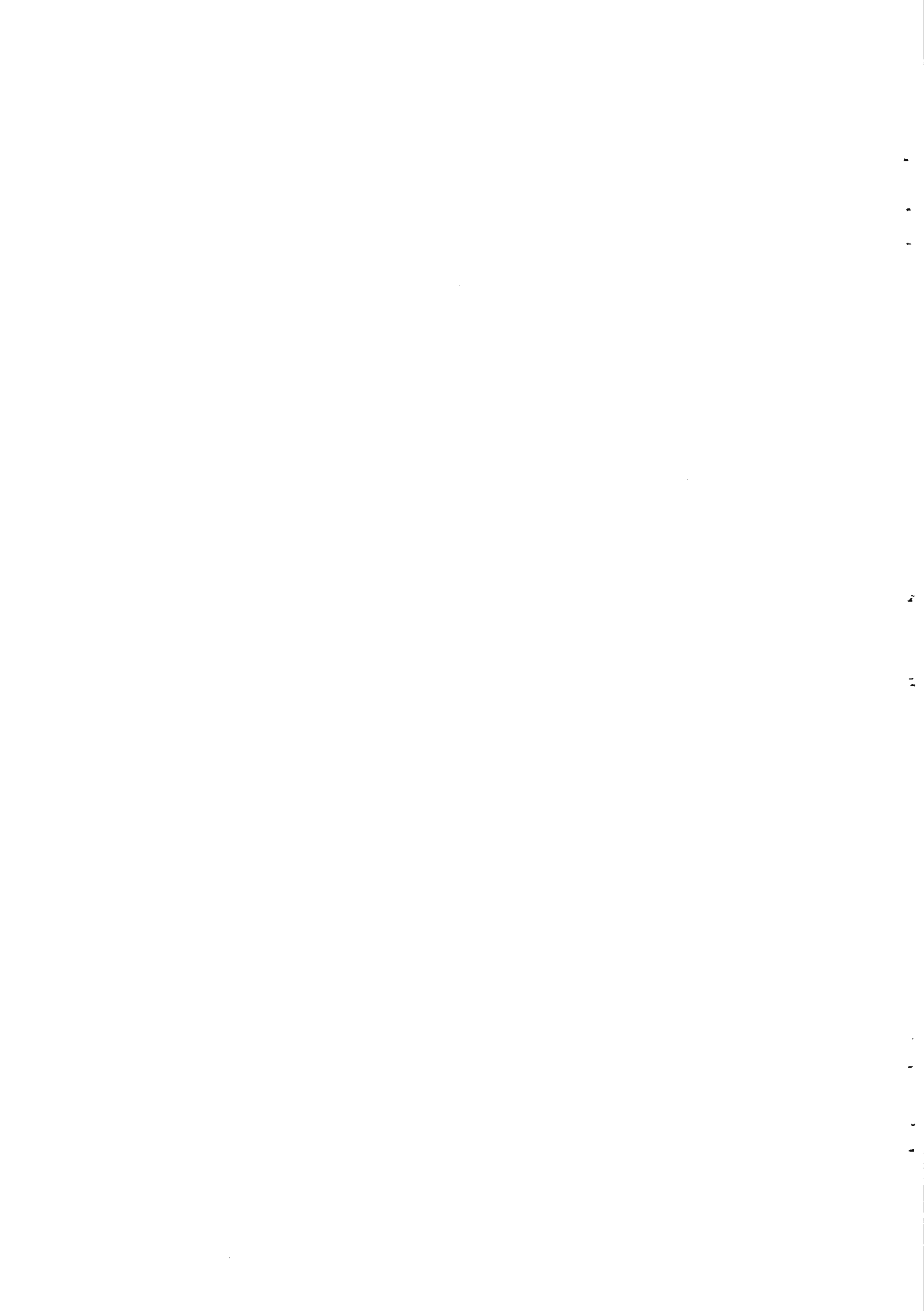
to choose majors that promise a quick job and a good salary. The majors that do not promise quick jobs and good salaries are forsaken. Young people with talent and interests that are not in accordance with trendy fields are forced to bury their talent and interests in order to follow the trend. Basic sciences, which were revered in former times are now losing their appeal simply because they do not seem to offer a ready-made answer to the needs of job providers. Applied sciences, on the other hand, gain preference because their graduates will immediately be recruited by the companies that need a ready-to-work staff. Research institutions have more difficulty in freely determining their research program, because donors are only interested in research that will produce formulas or techniques that can be easily put to commercial use. Commercialization of education, which should not be allowed in principle, has become the norm as educational institutions must compete with one another in order to get students into their schools. This worldwide trend is no doubt responsible for the loss of idealism in education. But, the major victim of this neo-capitalistic practice is the young person, the one strongly affected by such trends. While young people may not always be aware of the indoctrination they suffer from trends, those whose eyes are still clear would definitely recognize the signs of another story of child sacrifice.

Conclusion

The values recorded by the Abrahamic traditions based on the story of the sacrifice of Abraham's son are still relevant today, especially for the followers of those traditions. Studying the values inter-scripturally is also very useful as it will enrich and strengthen existing understanding. Nuances previously not recognized will be realized when people read the same story as it appears in the scripture of the other's religion. However, the inter-scriptural reading is not motivated merely by the quest for similarities. The differences between the Bible and the Qur'an also need to be elaborated. For adherents of the three religions, the differences will develop each one's understanding of the other religions on the one hand, and on the other, will deepen one's understanding of his/her own religion.

Above all, the sacrifice of Abraham's son leaves society with an existential question: that is, whether society can really allow incidents that harm young people to continue unopposed? Relating various forms of violence against young people to the story of the sacrifice of Abraham's son may, as indicated before, be too farfetched, but to ne-

glect the possibility that they may coalesce on a deeper level, is also a denial of reality. The latter is even more dangerous, for it allows the society to think there is nothing wrong with sacrificing youngsters. But if we agree that child sacrifice has to be stopped, then we must also eliminate noble justifications for such evil deeds. This is not to say that the lesson to be learned from the story of the sacrifice of Abraham's son should be discarded. Yes, the story has and still does inspire many, and for that reason it surely deserves a tribute. But, how marvelous it would be if we could gain something good without having to sacrifice anyone. If such a sacrifice cannot be avoided, perhaps it is our faith in it that needs to be rethought. Why would a supposedly good faith demand a sacrifice that denies someone else's best interests?



Towards a Poetical Ethics of Interreligious Reading in the Face of Sara and Hagar

Dorothea Erbele-Küster

Re-reading the Sara-Hagar story facing Sarai and Hajar likewise describes a hermeneutical struggle: How to deal with two or more contradictory contextual readings? Besides a hermeneutical it is a theological problem and an existential one. If I take a stance in the story as a Christian woman how can my reading be communicated to a Muslim or a Jewish woman? In the process of writing it became more and more difficult to take my own stance as a European Christian teaching Old Testament at the university in this story; whereas Sara seemed to be so easily identified with by my Jewish and Muslim colleagues alike and Hagar by the latter ones as well.[1] It would be much safer and easier to read the story just on my own; or to omit the ambiguous parts in the story, for example, the conflict between Sara and Hagar, as one of the first re-writings of Genesis in the Book of Jubilees 17 from the 2nd century BC does. However this is impossible for me, last but not least as we are indebted to the kinship between the so called Abrahamic religions.[2] And to put it from the other side of the coin: the story would not be this story without these troubles.[3]

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[1] Hibba Abugideiri. Hagar. A historical model for "Gender Jihad" in: Yvonne Y. Haddad and John L. Esposito. *Daughters of Abraham. Feminist Thought in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*. Gainsville 2001, 81-107. 82 stresses that "To be the daughter of Hagar discards the Islamic lineage of Sarah. Muslim affinities extend to *both* matriarchs quite comfortably and without contradiction".

[2] Cf. Volker Küster. Indebted to Kinship –The project of Abrahamitic ecumene contested, in: *Islam in the Netherlands*, 163-180. Cf. initiatives like: www.sarah-hagar.net; http://sarah-hagar.org/index.html or www.interkultureller-rat.de/projekte/abrahamisches-forum.

[3] After the presentation of my paper I was asked why I made it so complicated. Couldn't we stick just to one side of the story?

This article explores the Sara/Hagar stories from different scriptures and religions, wrestling with the challenges of a contextual, intercultural and interreligious reading of one's own scriptures and figures which are sacred to other religions or with whom wo/men of other religions identify as well. In the analysis of the texts I shall therefore not follow a strictly historical order as we face them simultaneously in the interreligious dialogue.

This story with its diverse prominent characters such as Abraham/Ibraim, Sara, Hagar/Hajar, Ishmael and Isaac belongs to at least three religious traditions, implying that their stories are told in different contexts where the protagonists already have different spellings/pronunciations of the names. Interestingly, these are often explained symbolically, as in the case of Hagar/Hajar being derived from the Hebrew *ger* (foreigner) or the Arabic word *hijrah* (migration); her name seems therefore to be "a symbolic description of the woman"[4]. In every tradition, religion or cultural context, the story is retold differently. Next to the context, therefore, it seems helpful to take the narrative structure into consideration.

My study is indebted to earlier manifold readings of the story/stories.[5] It shares with them several goals, such as first of all making sources available and engaging in counter-readings. Finally these counter-readings may serve as empowerment and reconciliation. Letty Russel and Phyllis Trible phrase it this way in their introduction to "Hagar, Sarah, and their children": "we can advocate as women of diverse faiths who refuse to allow those faiths to be used against us or against outsiders"[6]. The aim of the study is thus not just to present another contextual Christian reading of the story but to derive from the different conflicting readings strategies/conclusions for an interreligious hermeneutics. As it is about reading and retelling narratives, narrativity shall play a core role on a methodological level.

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[4] Martha Frederiks, Hagar in Islamic Tradition, in: *On the Edge of Many Worlds*. Festschrift voor Karel Steenbrink, ed. by Freek L. Bakker and Jan Sihar Aritonang, Zoetermeer 2006, 237-247, 240.

[5] Cf. Martha Frederiks, Hagar in Islamic Tradition; Phyllis Trible and Letty Russel (eds), *Hagar, Sarah, and their Children. Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives*, Louisville 2006; the more empirical study of Anne Hege Grung, *Gender Justice in Christian-Muslim Readings. Christian and Muslim Women in Norway making Meaning of Texts from the Bible, the Quran and the* Hadith: http://www.uio.no/english/research/interfaculty-research-reas /culcom/publications/phd/2011/grung.html.

[6] Phyllis Trible and Letty Russel, Unto the Thousand Generations, in: id., *Hagar, Sarah, and their Children*, 1-29, 25.

Narrativity[7] comes to play a core role in a twofold manner: How do we read the narratives and how do they read us? The concept of narrativity refers to the fact that we live our lives by stories; while conversely stories are capable of engaging us to the point of making us feel part of them. Therefore, the narrative structure of any story is more than just a quality of the text, it is an anthropological reality. Telling stories is crucial to the way we open up our world. Stories not only allow us to put our own experiences into words, to sort and interpret them, they also enable us to take part in other worlds, even to project alternative realities. With the help of the concept of narrativity and intertextuality I shall try to develop an po/et(h)ical approach to interreligious reading.[8]

1. Encounters and Confessions

Before re-reading the story I want to describe briefly the place from which I am reading and writing: I am a "philo-log", a woman who has fallen in love with texts, biblical texts in particular. While absorbed by the aesthetics of the texts, at the same time I struggle with these texts, which are rooted in a patriarchal setting. Even as scholar applying methods from the field of literature and cultural anthropology I am affected by the so-called historical-critical methods I was brought up with.

My re-reading starts and ends with re-translating. My awareness of its contextuality has been sharpened through participation in a Bible translation project rooted in the German speaking context ("Bibel in gerechter Sprache").[9] Facing injustice (social, religious, gender) two main endeavors were: How to translate an androcentric text (the Bible) in a way which shall empower wo/men? And how can we do justice to the fact that the Hebrew Bible is a Jewish book and is read in Jewish communities? Dialogue as in our case and the question of the other were central.

Having described my reading room it becomes clear that even if I am engaged here in Christian-Muslim Dialogue focusing on Dutch

[7] Cf. Dorothea Erbele-Küster, A Short Story of Narrativity in Biblical Studies, in: R. Ruard Ganzevoort et al. (eds). *Religious Stories we live by. Narrative Approaches in Theology and Religious Studies*, Leiden and Boston 2014, 75-87.

[8] Referring to a concept from the studies of literature, the question has been raised in the discussion whether we can read the Quran as literature.

[9] Cf. *Bibel in gerechter Sprache*, Ulrike Bail et al. (eds), *Gütersloh*, 4th revised ed. 2011 and www.bibelingerechtersprache.de.

(European) and Indonesian Perspectives, the third dialogue partner, Jewish readers from different cultures. is present at the (my writing) table.

I want to allude to some personal reading experiences of the story of Abraham, Sara and Hagar in Genesis 16 and 21. During my studies of theology at university in the early nineties I felt "emancipated" when I identified with Sara. The focus came on Sara and not on Abraham her husband, the male figure who has been called "patriarch" in the exegetical commentaries. Against this background there seemed to be reasons to be proud of Sara, the newly discovered matriarch. Consequently, they were labelled no longer patriarchal stories but ancestor stories.[10]

When I became acquainted with the Mexican theologian Elsa Tamez in a personal encounter in 1997 and her interpretation of this story[11] I had to realize that I had made a choice that was restricted by my perspective, by my white middle class situation. Sara fits into it.

This theologian working in Costa Rica identified herself with Hagar, the woman who is oppressed threefold:[12] in terms of gender, as a woman; in terms of her class, as slave; and in terms of race as Egyptian.[13] Black African American Christians like Dolores Williams argued in this vein as well.[14] Blackness was regarded as a uniting concept for reading together and rediscovering Hagar and their "Wilderness experience" in the diaspora. Tamez' reading alerted me to the implicit criticism of Sarai's role that the text contains. The messenger of God promising at the end of his speech in Genesis 16:9 that God has overheard the oppression of Hagar recalls the same word which was used for Sarai's behaviour in v6 thus thereby criticizing it implicitly.

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[10] Cf. Irmtraud Fischer, *Die Erzeltern Israels. Feministisch-Theologische Studien zu Genesis 12-36*, Berlin and New York 1994 and id., On the Significance of the "Women Texts "in the Ancestral Narratives, in: id. and M. Navarro Puerto (eds). *Torah. The Bible and the Women* Vol. 1, Atlanta 2011, 251-293.

[11] Cf. Elsa Tamez, The Woman Who Complicated the History of Salvation, in: *New Eyes for Reading. Biblical and Theological Reflections by Women of the Third World*, John S. Pobee and Bärbel von Wartenberg-Potter (eds), Geneva 1986, 5-17.

[12] Elsa Tamez, "Worship Service: This Hour of History," in: Virgina Fabella and Sergio Torres (eds), *Irruption of the Third World: Challenge to Theology*. Maryknoll, NY 1983, 183-185.

[13] A member of the group identified Hagar easily with the position of migrant workers in Indonesia.

[14] Cf. Dolores S. Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness. The Challenge of Womanist God-talk*. Maryknoll, NY 1994 and id.; Hagar in African American appropriation, in: Trible and Russell. *Hagar, Sarah, and their Children*, 171-184.

It is time for Sara to see this and to confess that she has oppressed Hagar! Phyllis Trible, for her part, after a feminist-rhetorical analysis of the repudiation of Hagar in Genesis 16 and 21 designates them therefore in her early groundbreaking work as 'texts of terror'.[15] In her latest contribution to this issue in a volume on interreligious dialogue this classification is missing.[16] Is it too harsh to pronounce facing Jewish women and/or has it after 9/11 other overtones?

Years later when I presented the interpretation of Elsa Tamez in a meeting on Jewish-Christian encounter, one of the Jewish colleagues, a female rabbi in the Netherlands, felt offended and defended Sarah while stressing that Hagar did wrong. According to this colleague, Hagar showed no respect for Sarah and her position. She reproached me for not taking into consideration the rabbinical commentaries on Sarah.[17] Even if I had not misused Sara by identifying myself with her and appropriating her as Christian, as has been done in Christian reception history starting from Galatians 4, I did wrong – according to her perception and likewise according to the rules of the dialogue to which I subscribe: to understand the other as s/he understands her/himself.

While studying rabbinical sources from the Talmud and Midrash I read: "Sarah was perfect in wisdom, in beauty, in innocence, in accomplishment, in consistency", referring to Rashi (Medieval Jewish commentator from Northern France), which explains the note on Sara's lifespan in Genesis 23:1 that all her years were equally good. The way she treated Hagar comes to my mind (Genesis 16:6, 21:10) and her laughter of disbelief (Genesis 18:12). The critical question rises in my mind: Is Rashi blind to her faults, to the physical and psychological abuse she has committed? Rabbi David Kimichi (medieval Provence), however, condemns Sarah's treatment. Ramban (Spain 1194-1271) states "the matriarch sinned by such maltreatment and

[15] Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror. Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*. Philadelphia 1986.

[16] Phyllis Trible, Ominous Beginnings for a Promise of Blessing, in: Trible and Russell, *Hagar, Sarah, and their Children*, 33-69.

[17] Cf. for a discussion of them: Adele Reinhartz and Miriam-Simma Walfish, Conflict and Coexistence in Jewish Interpretation, in: Trible and Russell, *Hagar, Sarah, and their Children*, 101-125; Irene Pabst, The interpretation of the Sarah-Hagar-stories in rabbinic and patristic literature. Sarah and Hagar as female representations of identity and difference, lectio difficilior 2003, *http://www.lectio.unibe.ch/03_1/pabst.htm* and Gianfranco Milleto, … nur wegen Sara ... Sara in der rabbinischen und mystischen Tradition, in: Rainer Kampling (ed.), *Sara lacht…. Eine Erzmutter und ihre Geschichte*, Paderborn etc. 2004, 157-167.

Abraham too by permitting it"[18]. I restrict myself to these quotes that display two different assessments of Sara within one tradition.

Thus applying one basic rule of interreligious dialogue – that the other should recognize herself in my description of herself – I search for the strengths of the reading strategies of the Jewish tradition. Sara serves as a positive identification figure next to Abraham. She is the matriarch. Her contribution to the history of the "children of Israel" is not muted as it has been in western Christian exegesis up to the nineties but praised. As it is promised by God in Genesis 17:16: "I will bless her so that she shall give rise to nations; rulers of peoples shall issue from her". In the Jewish tradition the life of Sara is remembered. In what follows I shall likewise unfold how I was challenged by the Muslim readings of the story.

Therefore the question arises: How can we wo/men from different religious backgrounds read the story together? Can womanhood serve as a common place to start the reading community, as the Swedish feminist theologian Helen Egnell has argued?[19] In the case of the Sara-Hagar story it becomes even more complicated, as the two women are rivals.

2. Deciphering the narrative structure

In this article I can't provide a close reading of the whole story in the Bible and in the Hadith and the verses in the Qur'an which allude to the story of Abraham and Ishmael. I focus on Genesis 16 and its reception history. Form-critical and source-critical studies brought to the fore the different perspectives and themes in Genesis 16. Whereas the first part of Genesis 16 seems to be about a rivalry between two women, the second part is labelled as an announcement scene of offspring to a woman. The final verse (from the so-called priestly layer) is a closing genealogical remark. Perspectives and themes vary thus within one story. If we address this issue from the standpoint of narrative and rhetorical studies we explore the different persons and perspectives

[18] Cf. the quote of Ramban by Nahum Sarna, *Genesis: The Traditional Hebrew Text with New JPS Translation*, Jewish Publication Society (Philadelphia, PA), 1989, 120; Cf. as well the discussion in: Reinhartz and Walfish, *Conflict and Coexistence in Jewish Interpretation*, 112-114.

[19] Helene Egnell, Dialogue for Life. Feminist Approaches to Interfaith Dialogue, in: Viggo Mortensen (ed.), *Theology and the Religions: A Dialogue*, Grand Rapids and Cambridge 2003, 249-256.

with the help of questions like: Who speaks up? Who is acting? How are the persons introduced?

The story starts with Sara and her problems; however, from the beginning she is introduced as woman of Abraham. Hagar is introduced as the Egyptian slave of Sara. There is thus clear social and economical dependency. "Beginning with Sarai and ending with Hagar, the sentence opposes the two women around the man Abraham".[20]

Abram consistently refers to Hagar as 'your (i.e. Sarai's) maid' (Genesis 16:6). Neither Sarai nor Abram ever mention Hagar's name. Apart from the narrator, the messenger of God is the only one to do so (Genesis 16:8). Through the dialogues (verses 2.5.6a) we have insight into the thoughts and emotions of Sarai and Abram. Then in verse 6b the perspective switches to Hagar and her actions, her flight. The very fact that the messenger of God addresses Hagar gives her the possibility to speak up.

At the very end it is about Abraham and his offspring: "Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram" (v16). The whole narration seems to be reduced (Hagar's pregnancy) to Abram and the son born to him.

In Genesis 16 we face three speech acts of God's messenger (in verses 8.9 and 11), each begun with an introductory formula:

> 7 An angel of the ETERNAL found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the road to Shur, and said:
> 8 Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?
> And she said: I am running away from my mistress Sarai.
> 9 And the angel of the ETERNAL said to her:
> Go back to your mistress, and submit to oppression.
> The angel of the ETERNAL said to her:
> Behold, you are with a child and shall bear a son;
> You shall call him Ishmael,
> For the ETERNAL has paid heed to your oppression.
> He shall be a wild ass of a man;
> His hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him. He shall dwell alongside of all his kin.

Each address has a different meaning. Whereas in v9 Hagar is asked to return to her mistress and to submit herself to oppression, in his last speech the messenger announces: God has overheard your oppression.

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[20] Trible, Ominous Beginnings for a Promise of Blessing, 38.

It becomes obvious from this short analysis of the narrative structure of Genesis 16 that the story itself encompasses different, indeed even rival, perspectives. The gaps, contradictions, comments and interruptions in the biblical stories, and I would say others likewise, make it possible to identify with the different parties.[21] I argue that the rival perspectives or the conflict is part of the story from the very beginning. Ambiguity and changing loyalties, however with a clear loyalty to justice, are rooted in the narrative structure. It invites the reader to encounter the Other – while foreclosing any once-and-for-all reading.

3. From contextual to postcolonial readings

I come back to two conflicting readings: one by the Christian theologian Elsa Tamez, who stresses the threefold oppression of Hagar, and the other by the Muslim scholar Hibba Abugideiri, who interprets Hagar as a role model of faith and women's liberation. Hagar as God-chosen is a symbol of *taqwa* (reliance on God/God consciousness).[22]

We can see that a contextual reading is about making sense and being relevant in one's own context. However, if one chooses the position of justice and empowerment one is alert in general to injustice. Once you have identified with the powerless or your power position you will be able to identify with other powerless people, even those over whom you dominate; this is at least the hope. To quote once again Phyllis Trible and Letty Russel: "To ask about the presence of women in the grand narrative is, by extension, to ask what the voices of all marginalized people can contribute to overcoming division and hostility."[23] There is therefore a consequent move from liberationist contextual hermeneutics to intercultural and postcolonial hermeneutics which shows us our blind spots as they relate the colonizer/dominant culture and the colonized in liberationist interdependence.[24]

Post-colonial exegesis has provided an angle from which to critically examine the narrative perspectives of biblical narrative allowing dissident readings. Basic questions in this line of research, according

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[21] Cf. Frederiks, *Hagar in Islamic Tradition*, 247 stressing the popularity of Hagar I in the devotional life of Muslims: "Exactly because the story of Hagar is not a smooth and easy tale, people identify with her and recognize in the Hagar story their own hurdles in life".

[22] Abugideiri, Hagar: A historical model for "Gender Jihad", 85-88.

[23] Trible and Russell, Unto the Thousand Generations, 25.

[24] On the relation between contextual and intercultural/postcolonial hermeneutics/theology cf. Volker Küster, *Einführung in die Interkulturelle Theologie*, Göttingen 2011, § 2 and 3.

to Musa Dube, are: 'how does this text construct difference: is there dialogue and mutual interdependence, or condemnation and rejection of all that is foreign?' In fact, these questions include the gender issue: 'does this text employ gender representations to construct relationships of subordination and domination?'[25]

Musa Dube has coined the term *Rahab's Reading Prism* to refer to this new reading strategy, which uncovers the colonial traits of texts and their common interpretations. The biblical figure of Rahab from Jericho (cf. Joshua 2; 6) symbolizes the protest against the encroachment of her story by the West. In this line I would like to speak of *Hagar's Reading Prism*. The first step is to re-discover Hagar as a figure of one's own tradition. The second step is to discover Hagar as the figure of another tradition/religion to which you do not belong. The third step would be to try to combine these readings of the Hagar story/to read the Hagar stories together while noticing the conflicting and common reading strategies.

Indeed we can observe acts of hijacking of the tradition of the other: From the very first beginnings the story was claimed by different traditions. Figures were said to belong to one's own tradition. For example the church father "Augustine of Hippo (d. 430) argues that Jews, contrary to their claim, descend from Hagar while Christians are the 'seed of Abraham'".[26]

Having the questions of Musa Dube in mind we were struck as we read by the note in Genesis 25:11 almost at the end of the Hagar/Ishmael/Isaac story that tells us that after the death of Abraham Isaac settled near Beer Lachai Roi.[27] It seems to be an act of occupying a place that in fact belongs to the other, his brother Ishmael's family, as it is the well where Hagar was found by the angel of God. This well is named after the revelation of Hagar, the mother of his brother Ishmael (Genesis 16:13f.).

Hagar gives God a name in accordance with the experience she has had. She is the first person in the Hebrew Bible to name GOD. Her act inscribes itself in the landscape and gives the well the name Beer Lachai Roi, meaning "the well of seeing" or "well of my (Ha-

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[25] Musa W. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, Saint Louis, Missouri 2000, 57.

[26] Trible and Russel, Unto the Thousand Generation, in: id., *Hagar, Sarah, and Their Children*, 7.

[27] Gen 25:11: "And it was after the death of Abraham that God blessed Isaac his son, and Isaac settled near Beer Lachai Roi".

gar's) vision of the living one", referring back to Genesis 16:13. Does Isaac expel Hagar's offspring from their sources (of water)? Or is the remark in Genesis 25:11 that Isaac settled near Beer Lachai Roi a sign that he is looking for Hagar and her experiences? Will drinking from this well allow him to see the injustice his mother Sara has done and the promise that was given to his brother?[28] This short analysis around Genesis 25 unfolds the ambiguity of one text and the interrelatedness of texts.

4. Intertextual Readings[29]

Thus we never read just one text. Texts dialogue with each other. Intertexuality describes this phenomenon of interrelatedness of texts:

> The notion of intertextuality is also an extension and concretization of the philosophical position that there is no such thing as a true, objective mimesis of reality in language. Reality is always represented through texts that refer to other texts, through language that is a construction of the historical, ideological, and social system of a people.[30]

Allusions in texts presuppose the alluded to story as one that is known.[31] For example Sura Ibrahim/14:37 was connected to the Hagar-Ishmael story. The hadith told by Sahih Al-Bukhari (died 870) in book 55, Number 583 on the prophets (*anbiya*) quoting Sura Ibrahim 14:37 links it to the situation after Abram had just expelled Hagar and her son:[32]

> Abraham brought her [Hagar] and her son Ishmael while she was suckling him, to a place near the Ka'ba under a tree on the spot of Zam-zam, at the highest place in the mosque. During those days there was nobody in Mecca, nor was there any water. So he made them sit over there and placed near them a leather bag containing some dates, and a small water-skin containing

[28] According to Genesis R.LX.14 Isaac came to the place to look for Hagar. Cf. Magdalena L. Frettlöh, Isaak und seine Mütter. Beobachtungen zur exegetischen Verdrängung von Frauen am Beispiel von Gen 14,62-67, in: *Evangelische Theologie* 54, 1994, 427-452, 447-449 on the importance of the well.

[29] For the use of intertextuality regarding the interreligious reading practices cf. Grung, Gender Justice in Christian-Muslim Readings, 26-28 basing herself on the studies of Lissi Rasmussen.

[30] Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*, Bloommington and Indianapolis 1990, 14.

[31] For example regarding biblical texts: Psalm superscriptions shorten down narratives, like the one in Ps 51: "When Nathan comes to David after he had come to Bathseba". This short notice would not be understandable if one would not know the story in 2 Sam 11.

[32] The *Sahih* of Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 55, Number 583 quoted by Frederiks, Hagar in Islamic Tradition, 243f.

> some water, and set out homeward. Ishmael's mother followed him saying, "O Abraham! Where are you going, leaving us in this valley where there is no person whose company we may enjoy, nor is there anything (to enjoy)?" She repeated that to him many times, but he did not look back at her. Then she asked him, "Has Allah ordered you to do so?" He said, "Yes." She said, "Then He will not neglect us," and returned while Abraham proceeded onwards, and on reaching the Thaniya where they could not see him, he faced the Ka'ba, and raising both hands, invoked Allah saying the following prayers: 'O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley without cultivation, by Thy Sacred House; In order, O our Lord, that they may establish regular Prayer. So fill the hearts of some among men with love towards them, and feed them with fruits: so that they may give thanks.' (14.37)[33]

Ishmael's mother went on suckling Ishmael and drinking from the water (she had). When the water in the water-skin had all been used up, she became thirsty and her child also became thirsty. She started looking at him, tossing in agony: She left him, for she could not endure looking at him, and found that the mountain of Safa was the nearest mountain to her on that land. She stood on it and started looking at the valley keenly so that she might see somebody, but she could not see anybody. Then she descended from Safa and when she reached the valley, she tucked up her robe and ran in the valley and reached the Marwa mountain where she stood and started looking, expecting to see somebody, but she could not see anybody. She repeated that (running between Safa and Marwa) seven times. The prophet said: "This is the source of the tradition of the walking of the people between them (i.e. Safa and Marwa). When she reached Marwa (for the last time) she heard a voice and she asked herself to be quiet and listened attentively. She heard the voice again and said: "O! You have made me hear your voice; have you got something to help me?" And behold! She saw an angel at the place of Zam-zam, digging the earth with his heel (or his wing) till water flowed from that place.

The name of Hagar and her story are missing in the Qur'an, therefore an intertextual reading with other sources written and oral alike is needed in order to understand the prayer from Ibrahim and to give Hagar a voice. In terms of reader response criticism the gaps open a lot of freedom to narrate and interpret the Hagar-Ismael story.

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[33] A. Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'ān. Text, Translation and Commentary*, Maryland 1983, reprint of the first edition from 1934.

5. Re-enacting direct speech

Reading the texts (aloud) is performative. The gap of time and space between readers and texts blurs then, as it often happens in dialogical imaginative retellings of the stories[34] and in (interreligious) reading groups. We are invited to listen to the dialogues within the stories in order to perform our own interreligious dialogue. Dialogue generally is an important way of presenting the protagonists in any narrative.

Specifically, direct speech allows the reader to take varying internal focalisations, through its one-to-one representation, which establishes a close connection between the character and the reader.

In Genesis 21 we hear the desperate voice of Hagar in the wilderness:

> [16] Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, 'Do not let me look on the death of the child.' And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. [17] And God heard the voice of the boy; and the messenger of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, 'What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is.'

The story cites Hagar's direct speech to God. Her prayer opens up a second dimension: reading may become an act of praying. Following Hagar's expulsion into the wilderness and the emptying of the skin of water, she casts her child under one of the bushes and leaves him as she can't stand to watch him dying. Genesis 21 and the Hadith go along with each other on this point. According to Genesis 21 she cries out: "Do not let me look on the death of the child". The text does not say that her outcry is heard – but the voice of the boy is heard by God. An angel intervenes and gives blessings to her and her offspring. After these encounter her eyes can see the well of water. For Abugideiri this active struggles of Hagar are "integral aspects of *taqwa*, not simply passive faith in God"[35].

According to al-Bukhari, Hagar left her child behind in desperation as she could not endure looking at him and walked up the mountain of Safa in order to look out over the plain and to seek help, but in vain. Then she went up the other mountain/hill Marwa – again, in vain. We see Hajar running back and forth between the hills – seven times. Finally she hears a voice and responds to that voice: "O! You

[34] For the term cf. Kwok Pui-Lan and for imaginative retellings in Judaism: Adele Reinhartz and Miriam-Simma Walfish, *Conflict and Coexistence in Jewish Interpretation*, 117vv.
[35] Abugideiri, Hagar, 86.

have made me hear your voice; have you got something to help me?" She then sees an angel digging a well at Zam-zam for her.

The Hadith sketches a communication between Hagar and a heavenly voice. Sura 14 Ibrahim, 37 quoted in the same passage by Al-Bukhari contains a prayer as well, but from Ibrahim:

> O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in the valley without cultivation, by thy Sacred House; in order, our Lord, that they may establish regular Prayer, so fill the hearts of some among them with love towards them, and feed them with fruits: so that they may give thanks.

The prayer of Ibrahim expresses his wish that his offspring – why does he not explicitly mention Hagar as well? – may find a place and way to pray alike even in the wilderness. The placement of this prayer in the mouth of Abraham in the narration of the Hagar and Ishmael story by al-Bukhari after he had just sent them into the wilderness could be partly understood as Ibrahim accusing himself. Riffat Hassan gives a different interpretation of the prayer: "Abraham's prayer [...] shows that he believes that in order to fulfill the prophetic mission of building the Sacred House of God [...] it was necessary to leave a part of his family in the uninhabited and uncultivated land. His prayer further indicates his faith that this uninhabited land will become populated and fruitful and that God will ensure that those whom he is leaving behind will find sustenance and love".[36]

We can conclude that direct speech serves as a strong possibility to be part of the story: With Hagar we name God in Genesis 16, with Abraham in Sura 14:37 we express a wish for survival. And in Sara's speech acts we are confronted with her egoism and abuse of Hagar.

6. Ethics of Reading

As readers we face multiple and often contradictory options and must identify which we will choose, depending on our situation and on the way the narrative is told, for example, in the use of direct speech. Elucidating these different narrative perspectives may help us to understand the different identification options.

The narrative in Genesis 16 uses an all too clear vocabulary to describe Sarai's actions, as it is said that Sarai 'oppressed' her slave Hagar (Genesis 16:6). "Sarai would treat Hagar in Canaan much as she herself was treated in Egypt: the object of use for the desires of others.

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[36] Hassam, Islamic Hagar and Her Family, 153.

Like oppressor, like oppressed"[37]. The verb connotes harsh treatment – what the descendents of Abraham shall undergo in Egypt (Exodus 1:11.12). In our story, however, it is used for what the Egyptian slave has to undergo. It is likewise no coincidence that the narrator puts the same root in the angel's mouth as he addresses Hagar later on in the desert. The angel's assurance that 'God has heard your oppression' (Genesis 16:11) constitutes a serious criticism of Sarai's attitude towards Hagar.

There are other points of identification with Hagar. In Hajar, the abandoned mother, Amina Wadud sees a foreshadow of her own experiences and other mothers within the Muslim community.[38] She asks for taking the Hajar experiences into consideration on a legal and social level, arguing for an egalitarian notion of family and domestic/childcare responsibilities beyond a patriarchal bias of the nuclear family. She alludes to the examples of "our modern-day Hajars [the African-American Single, heads of household] the women who have had to do both, while having her role in one sphere make her role in the other sphere invisible or impossible"[39].

Ethical awareness, then, arises through an exploration of the multiple points of identification that a story offers. and their discontinuities. This leads us to an ethical stance in our reading.

As narratology gains importance, interpretation of texts from Bible and Qur'an may shift away from the direct moral application of the text, towards an ethical understanding of the act of reading itself. This 'ethics of reading' realises that multiple ethical perspectives are contained in the contradictions and gaps within narrative structures. In the stories at hand we encounter ambiguity as well in the way we perceive God's action and presence: "God both cares for Hagar and orders her to suffer"[40]. The strangeness of these perspectives makes us aware of the 'other' and its fragility. This provides first of all a framework that allows difference and the encounter with the other within the so-called own tradition. In a second stance it may serve as a fruitful ground for an interreligious reading. Reading stories from the Bible, the Qur'an

[37] Trible. *Ominous Beginnings for a Promise of Blessings*. 38.

[38] Amina Wadud. A New Hajar Paradigm: Motherhood and Family. in: id.. *Inside the Gender Jihad. Women's Reform in Islam*. Oxford 2006. 120-157.

[39] Wadud. *A New Hajar Paradigm*. 157 cf. as well 153.

[40] Trible and Russell. Unto the Thousand Generation. 25: "... promises Sarah a child but withholds the fulfilment until after problems arise and rejects Ishmael as the child of promise but makes of him a great nation. If Scripture yields no single answer to God's preferences, it does show that human beings yearn above all else to be among God's chosen".

and the tradition together becomes what might be called committed reading.

In this act of reading we address the (moral) dilemmas in the texts from within our context. We bring in our ethical stances and cultural perspectives. Anne Hege Grung stressed this at a meeting on the eve of Woman's day in Utrecht in March 2012: "Gender *Justice* is a fluid concept and connects to the notion of justice in the Christian and Islamic tradition".

7. Poetical re-writings of the stories

I have moved from one tradition to another in a kind of contrapuntal interreligious reading, as we cannot read the story just from one perspective. The many stories we tell and listen to, are far from consistent in themselves or with each other, reflect our conflicting human experiences. Likewise, the multiple traditions and narratives, Muslim, Christian and Jewish, testify to the fact that there is no such thing as one single (his- or her) story.

If we take the narratives seriously the poetical and esthetical character of these texts becomes important. Listening to Sahiron Syamsuddin and her stress on mystic traditions in order to create space for understanding and dialogue confirms this. Having shown the power of narrativity and aesthetics I want to conclude with *three* poetical re-writings of the stories.[41] One from a contemporary Arab Syrian-Libanese background: Adonis, pseudonym for Ali Ahmad Said Asbar (born 1930) who struggles with war, escape and life in exile. The second from Nelly Sachs (1891-1970) of European Jewish background, struggling likewise with these issues after the Shoa. For both authors living in exile the search for a "well", in order to survive stands central. Nelly Sachs' poem recalls to the thirsty their wells.[42]

> But your wells are your diaries, O Israel
>
> You, thirsty in the flesh of the earth
> many encounters are safeguarded for you
> in the fluid prayer shrine of the wells.

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[41] For another poem cf.: Mohja Kahf, 'The Water of Hajar and Other Poems', *Muslim World* 91, 2001, 31ff quoted by Frederiks, *Hagar in Islamic Tradition*, 242.

[42] Translation into English by the author. Cf. Nelly Sachs, *Fahrt ins Staublose. Gedichte*, Frankfurt a.M. 1988, 98f: Aber deine Brunnen /sind deine Tagebücher / o Israel /Ihr, durch das Fleisch der Erde Dürstenden,/viele Begegnungen sind euch aufbewahrt /im fließenden Gebetschrein der Brunnen. /Gesicht des Engels /über Hagars Schulter geneigt/wie eine Nebelhaut/ihren Tod fortblasend.

Face of the angel,
bowed down over Hagar's shoulder
like a skin of fog
blowing away her death.

Nelly Sachs addresses her own community – the Jewish post-holocaust community. The wells belong to them. However she wants to dig the wells and drink the water in order that humanity as a whole may survive. Remembrance serves as a means to survive. In the wells the encounters are guarded. The well is like a prayer-niche. The water in the well reflects the face of the angel tenderly embracing Hagar – not Sara. Death can be blown away.

Adonis, the Syrian poet and essayist, after having fled to the neighboring country of Lebanon in the sixties, escaped the Lebanese Civil war in the eighties and migrated to France. His book "Histoire qui se déchire sur le corps d'une femme" is a dialogical re-imagining of the Hagar story written in lyrics.[43] It is a story that tears apart the body of a woman.[44]

The land which is muted and sleepy
Begins to talk
Opens his eyelids
Opens under my garment an abyss
And my breast aspens with hers
My roots are those who nourish themselves from this land
The water of ZamZam becomes a second blood in my veins
Ahead of me the universe is closed
My child is the dawn of the morning
I get lost in him
I meditate on a star and feel that I fall asleep in his arms

Finally a poem written by one of the Indonesian Christian members of the consortium: In her poem Nancy Novitra Souisa[45] binds the voices of Sara and Hagar together.[46] In their sights and hopes they are united.

[43] Histoire qui se déchire sur le corps d'une femme. Traduction de l'arabe et postface de Houria Abdelouhed 2008.

[44] Translation into English by the author. Cf. Adonis. Histoire qui se déchire sur le corps d'une femme.123: La terre qui fut silence et sommeil / Commence à parler /Ouvre ses paupières / S'engouffre sous mon vêtement / Et ma poitrine palpite avec la sienne [....] / Mes racines sont celle qui se nourrissent dans cette terre. L'eau de Zamzam devient un second sang dans mes veines. /Devant moi en ce moment l univers est clos: mon enfant est crépuscule totale- je m'éparpille en lui / Je contemple un astre et sens que je sommeille dans ses bras.

[45] Mengapa /Jika rahim kami adalah anugerah/ Kami di sudutkan/ di tempat hampir tak berpilihan/ Uh /Kami berkeluh/ Ah/ kami meratap/Sampai/Tuhan membela kami /satu per satu/Sarah – ditempatku Tuhan membuatku tersenyum/ Hagar – di pelarianku Tuhan me-

That night
the moon shrinks from smile
The night clouds arduous to move
when they see the gloom
two troubled hearts and their daughters[47] burst out
If the birth of a new human being is a gift
Why our womb being so anxious whereas we want to rejoice
If our womb is a gift
Why they put aside into an area where we almost have no choice

Uh - we sigh
Ah - we mourn
Until God defends us one by one
Sarah - in my place God makes me smile
Hagar - on my flight God sees
Wail and lament - let your voices be heard continuously
So that our sufferings enough up here
just end on us
Never again our daughters shall cry
separated by ideological chasms
Let them rejoice since their birth is a gift
No pain - no sorrow - no curse
Let them tell their descendants about blessings from a woman, a mother, a human being.

The multiple possibilities of identification offered by the texts from our intertwined traditions are the seeds of narrative ethics. In re-reading her and his stories we rewrite history. Hagar and Sara join each other in their care for their daughters. Sharing our wells and their beauty shall be fruitful.

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lihat/Ratap dan keluh /perdengarkan suaramu terus/ Supaya derita kami cukuplah sampai di sini /Sampai pada kami saja /Jangan lagi anak-anak kami menangis/Karena terpisah dalam jurang-jurang ideologi/ Biarlah mereka bersuka .. karena kelahiran mereka adalah anugerah /Bukan derita – nestapa – kutukan/Biarlah keturunan mereka bercerita /tentang berkat dari kehidupan seorang perempuan /seorang ibu / seorang manusia. For my translation I gratefully made use of the English translation of the poet Nancy Souisa herself and of a translation into Dutch by Josien Folbert/Kerk in Actie.

[46] Or like Letty Russell, 185 puts it: "how can we rewrite the story so that the two women are reconciled?"

[47] Nancy Souisa herself translated *anaknya* with "daughters", unlike the Dutch translator who choose "children". According to http://firefox.sederet.com/translate.php it could mean son, her son, his son, children, daughters and seems therefore not a gendered noun.

Women as Disciples.
Female Authority in Christian Scripture

Syafa'atun Almirzanah

"Truly I tell you what she has done will be told in memory of her."(Matthew 26: 13; Mark 14: 3-9)

Women of all time have made babies within their bodies. In this sense they are vessels of life. They transform food – bread and wine – into the body and blood of their children. They are the first priests in a very physical sense (Rosemary Luckett, "Women make Eucharist Too.")

Formerly, both in the Church and in the Muslim community, women were seen as valuable, but lacking in religious authority. Nowadays, many women do claim that they have the right to speak and to interpret their tradition In order to do that, rereading and reinterpreting the scriptures is necessary. As a Muslim female scholar, I have been interested in the way Christians interpret their Scripture, especially the Gospels. In this article, I would like to focus on the concept of 'discipleship' and its changed meanings in the Christian tradition. This is important, as in traditional Christian thinking, Jesus passed on his own authority to his disciples. They were to be the ones to spread the words of God throughout the earth. Traditionally, the Church has claimed that the disciples of Jesus were confined to the twelve men he called in the Gospels. But is an alternative reading of these Gospel texts possible, and what would that mean for female authority?

1. Hermeneutical space

This research begins from the standpoint that insight and enlightenment are provided in various contexts and by various people. Thus, everybody has his or her right to understand the words s/he hears or reads. S/he has his/her own reflection on the Bible. It is in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council that there is no exclusive right for celibate males only.

In addition, faith is not something static that appears once and for always. Faith, rather, is of a dynamic character that knows both the rhythm of negative development (decreasing, failing, becoming weak) and a positive growth (increasing, deepening and becoming stronger).

Christians follow two pillars, the Scriptures (The Bible) and the Tradition. It should be noted that there are a number of factors, which can influence what the outcome of an individual's understanding of the scriptures is. Sociological, cultural and intellectual circumstances, or what Arkoun describes as the *'aesthetics of reception'*, are significant in determining the forms and substance of interpretation. *'Aesthetics of reception'* means, 'how a discourse, oral or written, is received by listeners or readers'. It refers to the conditions of individual perception of each level of culture corresponding to a social group in every phase of historical development.[1]

Different intellectual inclinations influence the effort to understand the Scripture and thus lead to different interpretations of a particular doctrine. This can take the form of recovering the true meaning of the doctrine as literally expressed in the text, or finding general principles of doctrine beyond its literal or textual expression.

One also has to take into account the sociological influences while interpreting a divine scripture, let alone the tradition. No interpretation, however honest, can be free of such influence. The theologians of the 1st century of Christianity who have acquired great prestige and whose opinion is taken as final in Christian traditions were themselves not free from such influences. Their formulations and interpretations must be seen against the sociological perspective of their time, and cannot be seen apart from these limitations. Thus, any interpretation of scripture bears marks of the ethos of its own times.

If we carry this argument a little further we can say that while the scriptures were undoubtedly revealed for the whole of humankind and

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[1] Cf., Mohammed Arkoun, The Concept of Authority in Islamic Thought, in: Klaus Ferdinand and Mehdi Mozaffari (eds), *Islam: State and Society*, London 1988, 58.

for all times to come, they contained that which had significance for the peoples to whom it was revealed in order to be acceptable to them in their place and time. To be acceptable to the people to whom it is revealed, scripture must have immediate relevance for them. One might say that scripture is contextually determined by their history, cultures and traditions. Indeed, the Gospels themselves are "four different statements reflecting at least four primitive Christian communities who believed that Yeshua (Jesus) was the Messiah. They were composed from a variety of sources, written and oral, over period of time and in response to certain needs felt in the communities and individuals at the time."[2] Furthermore, according to Mary T. Malone, "none of Gospels is an eye-witness account of the events it narrates and it appears that none of the named evangelists was an actual follower of the historical Jesus. Each writes from his own church context some forty to seventy years after the death of Jesus."[3] One cannot therefore deduce from verses in the scriptures in isolation from their historical context as constitution or as legal code. It is for this reason that reinterpretation is needed when turning to the gospels. Mark, for example, wrote for a church enduring persecution in the early seventies of the Christian era, and thus, his main interest is in Jesus' suffering. John, however, is addressing a community whose need is more practical and mystical and offering a correction to some synoptic themes.

If early Christians were able to interpret the scriptures and other sources according to their context, contemporary Christians should be able to do the same at the present time. Throughout its history, the understanding and implementation of Christianity has been influenced by the social and political realities of Christian communities.

Unless the text and its context are continually being reheard in the ever new texture, one is really not hearing what the text means. When there are real shifts or changes within the texture, especially when human experience evolves from tribal to global, there must be new interpretation of the text. Thus, no single scripture trajectory of any teaching should be absolutized and allowed to absorb the others. The evolutionary process of interpretation that makes up the scriptures must continue today in the same manner in which it took place then, in continuity with what went before, preserving the past without em-

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[2] Leonard Swidler, *Yeshua. A Model for Moderns*, Kansas City 1988, 69.

[3] Mary T. Malone, *Women and Christianity*, Vol. 1, Maryknoll, NY 2001, 24.

balming it, faithful to the past without being limited by it. We should be aware of the historical context in which Christianity grew up, and take it into consideration when interpreting the doctrine.

2. Discipleship in the Gospels

What is the nature of discipleship?
The usual questions raised about the subject are: what is discipleship? Is it a matter of becoming or is it a process of being a disciple? Is discipleship a process of being educated by a teacher, or is it a process of becoming like a master? Is discipleship a process for everyone or is it just for a select few?

Mathetes is the word used in Greek for the word disciple. It served as a term complementary to *didaskalos*, meaning teacher. In Greek tradition, disciples were "those who were devoted to the Greek philosophical school, as well as those engaged in learning in general."[4] In this meaning it is important to notice that there was a strong element attached to the Hellenistic use of *mathetes*, disciple.

In Christian tradition, Jesus never schooled his disciples in methods of interpretation, rather he communicated to them directly the will of God. But this does not mean that the disciples learned nothing of an intellectual content. In the Gospel of Matthew the word 'disciple' and its related verbal form have also at times an educational, intellectual sense.[5] In this case discipleship simply means the process of being educated by a teacher. Mark also uses didactic terms in a very emphatic way in describing the person and work of Jesus. Here the teacher-disciple relationship has a definite intellectual aspect of content to be learned.[6] More frequently, however, "discipleship seems to involve life transformation."[7] In such cases, discipleship means a process of becoming like a master. While at times the scripture (Matthew 27: 57 and Acts 14: 21) focuses on the beginning of the process, that is, the process of becoming a disciple, more frequently (Luke 14: 21) it focuses on being a disciple, that is, the process of becoming like a master.

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[4] Robert P. Meye, Jesus and the Twelve, Discipleship and Revelation in Mark's Gospel. Grand Rapids 1968, 93.
[5] Cf. for example Matthew 10:24 and 13:52.
[6] Meye, *Jesus and the Twelve*, 96.
[7] James G. Samra, "A Biblical View of Discipleship." in: *Bibliotheca Sacra* 160, April - June 2003: 219. Here he refers to Matthew 16: 24 and Mark 8: 34.

Who were the disciples, according to the Gospel writers?
If we look at the different Gospels, in fact there are various references for the word 'disciple'. Matthew 8: 21 refers to those who occasionally followed Christ. Thus, it means "discipleship was a process whereby the masses learned more about Christ."[8] The word 'disciple' is also is used of those select few who were being trained to be leaders of the church. In such cases discipleship means the process of selecting a specific people to become like Jesus.

Meier's book, *A Marginal Jew*, notes that the term 'disciple' itself is not the usual term used to address each other by the early Christians, but was later applied to members of early church by Luke. Historically and strictly speaking a person qualified to be called disciple if he was called at Jesus' command to follow him. Here, "following" is not simply absorbing and practicing his teaching, but literally and physically following, as Jesus undertook various preaching tours of Galilee, Judea and surrounding areas. And once a disciple answered the call, he was no longer free to drop out. They had to be absolutely committed to him and his mission.[9] Thus, strictly speaking, today there are no more disciples of Jesus.[10]

Although Mark recorded relatively little about Jesus' teaching, his major theme is discipleship. In this case Mark uses of the term 'twelve' which is used interchangeably with the word 'disciple'. Thus it is clear that according in Mark's conception, the twelve were disciples who followed Jesus' example. In Mark, disciples were required to come after Jesus, deny themselves and take up their crosses (Mark 8: 34). "Come after me" or "follow me" is a general command, which specifically links discipleship to Jesus. It is a challenge to those who would be his disciples. According to Ernest Best, this call is not to accept a certain teaching, live by it, continue faithfully to interpret it and pass it on; nor it is a call to accept a philosophical position; nor it is a call to devote one's life to the alleviation of the suffering of oth-

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[8] Op. cit., 220.

[9] Cf. John P Meier, *A Marginal Jew, Rethinking the Historical Jesus*. New York 2001.

[10] Except if the word "disciple" refers to all believers, which is used in Acts. According to James Samra. the term "disciple" is not used outside the Gospel and Acts. He said that John, Paul, Peter and others never spoke of their own followers as disciples. He is also questioning whether this might be an indication that the term disciple is not the best term for believers to use today. Cf. Samra, A Biblical View of Discipleship, 12.

ers. "It is a call to fall in behind Jesus and to go with him. It is further a call to deny oneself."[11]

Unlike Mark, Luke recorded a large quantity of Jesus' teaching on discipleship. For example, he recorded one who wanted to become like Jesus had to go with him to Jerusalem.[12] Thus, it can be inferred that discipleship is a matter of becoming like Christ by following him physically, seeing what he did, hearing what he said and following his example.[13] Besides that, Luke 14 says, that one must 'hate' all one's family members and one's own life, must take one's cross and must forsake all one owns. Otherwise, one cannot be his disciple. Thus, "as long as one thinks anything may really be more valuable than fellowship with Jesus in his Kingdom, one cannot learn from him."[14] And learning was an activity of disciples during the life of Jesus, as it says in Matthew 11: 29, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me ...".

Discipleship as a mission

Quoting from the story of Elizabeth of Hungary, the meaning of discipleship according to feminist theologian Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza seems to have had a broader meaning, i.e., following the example or life of Jesus in his poverty. It is a radical discipleship.[15] Although according to Mayer the term 'disciple' is never applied to women, or the whole group of women followers, Schüssler states that the calling of Jesus is the same for men and women, i.e., to be called to discipleship and sainthood. Even in the New Testament, she says, the title 'priest' is for all believers and Christians, not to any church 'office'.[16] And because the gift of the spirit is not restricted to a certain group, all members of the church community are called to exercise their spiritual gifts for building up the body of Christ. Every person has the capabil-

[11] Ernest Best, *Disciple and Discipleship. Studies in the Gospel according to Mark*, Edinburgh 1986, 8.

[12] Cf. Luke 9:23-27; 57-62; 14: 25-33; 18: 18-30.

[13] In Islamic tradition they are called "*sahabah*", one who accompanied Muhammad, saw what he did, heard what he said and also followed his example. Thus, today there are no more "*sahabah*".

[14] Dallas Willard, How to be a Disciple, in: *The Christian Century*, April 22-29, 1998, 434.

[15] Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Discipleship of Equals, A Critical Feminist Ekklesia-logy of Liberation*, New York 1993, 43. So Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, is also called disciple, although he was not among the disciples in the itinerant group with Jesus. The crowd as the object of Jesus' ministry at the Sermon on the Mount followed Jesus just as the disciples followed him. And there is no reason to say that following in this case is less committed than of the disciple. Cf. Talvikki Mattila, *Citizens of the Kingdom, Followers in Matthew from a Feminist Perspective*, Helsinki 2002, 182.

[16] Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Discipleship of Equals*, 34.

ity and authority to preach, to forgive sins, to participate in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. All have capability and rights to fulfill ecclesial and liturgical functions. This is why she says that both ordained and non-ordained members of the church have to contribute to building up the body of Christ and his mission in the world.[17] She sets out to explain how the Markan and Johannine traditions support an alternative vision of discipleship and leadership that is inclusive of women in her seminal work *In Memory of Her*.[18] At the same time she also cautions against those who focus only on women.[19]

According to the gospel of Mark, discipleship begins with a call by Jesus. This is one of the basic aspects of discipleship. "It is an event, a condition, or a status, which is initiated by Christ himself."[20]

The focus of the call to discipleship was the Kingdom of God (God's reign). And it was this call that attracted the would-be disciple. The call to the Kingdom of God is urgent. Jesus called to a man to follow him, but the man answered that he has to bury his father first. Jesus reacted as though offended; he knew that this was an attempt to diminish the call. His call is a warning for people not to be so absorbed in worldly affairs and ignore God. Thus, the call was a command for repentance, that is, conversion, which means turning around /changing one's way of life to a new direction. This call was radical, unconditional, comprehensive and costly. The most radical challenge was Jesus' saying "whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33). "He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me ... (Matthew: 10: 37) and "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14: 26). Thus again, "Jesus' call for discipleship is a call first and foremost to recognize the reality of God's rule and a call to follow him."[21]

Other basic aspects of discipleship according to Mark are discipleship as a mission, discipleship as a *diakonia*, discipleship as

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[17] Op. cit., 18.

[18] Cf., Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. *In Memory of Her. A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origin*, London 1995.

[19] Op. cit., xiv.

[20] Bishop Demetrios Trakatellis. 'Follow me' (Mark 2. 14) Discipleship and Priesthood, in: *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 30, 1985, 272.

[21] James Dunne, *Jesus' Call to Discipleship*, Cambridge 1995, 30.

knowledge of Christ, and discipleship as a total offering of one's self.[22]

Discipleship: following Jesus

According to Dennis M. Sweetland, in *Our Journey with Jesus*, in order to answer the question of who is the disciple, the logical place to start is to look at the story of Jesus' call and commission in the Gospel. Besides looking at the Gospel of Luke, this author will also look at the story in the Acts to determine if there were any changes in the requirements for discipleship during Jesus' era (the earthly Jesus) and the post Eastern church era.[23]

In Luke a communal dimension to discipleship is important. After praying all night, Jesus called his disciples and chose from them the twelve. Here there is a difference between Luke and Mark, i.e., Luke stressed the importance of prayer as the element of discipleship and differentiated missions between the Twelve and the Seventy. The Twelve were specifically sent out to preach the Kingdom of God. The Seventy were sent to foreshadow the universal mission.[24]

In Acts, discipleship is not expressed explicitly as to follow Jesus. Luke might be avoiding the use of the word 'following' after the death of Jesus. Or he may be using the word in a figurative way, which means that it is not only physical. Thus, discipleship is the "identification of oneself with the master's way of life and destiny in an intimate, personal following him. Following Jesus means making progress in the life of faith."[25] Thus, to be a follower of Jesus is to find oneself in the same situation as that of Jesus. Here the definition of discipleship seems broader. It can be inferred that whoever follows Jesus' way can be called a disciple. It does not demand that one follow him physically. I can say, according to the above definition whoever follows Jesus' way can be called a disciple irrespective of any religious affiliation. Thus, conversely, a Christian who does not follow Jesus' way cannot be called Jesus' disciple. This can also be supported by Peter's words: "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (10: 34-35).

[22] For the whole discussion of those aspects, see Trakatellis, op. cit., 271-285.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Sweetland, *Our Journey with Jesus*, 24-29.
[25] Op. cit., 54.

3. Jesus' attitude towards women

In the Gospel of Mark we can see how Jesus behaved toward women. He never said nor did anything to indicate that he was treating women as inferior to men. Jesus even freely associated with women (Mark 1: 30-31; 3: 31-35; 5: 25-34; 7: 24-29; 15: 40-41). Women were included along with men in Jesus' ministry of teaching, preaching and healing. This inclusion of women was a radical departure from the thinking of the time. For Jesus, "women just like men are called to do the will of God."[26] Women also are mentioned explicitly when Jesus discusses the costs and rewards of discipleship.[27]

From the resurrection stories in the Gospels we also can learn much about Jesus' attitude toward women. In these stories the resurrection is closely involving women. The first example is the account of the raising of a woman, Jairus' daughter (Matthew 9: 18ff, Luke 8: 41ff). The second account was the raising of the only son of the widow of Naid, performed by Jesus, "And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, 'Do not weep'". The third resurrection performed by Jesus was Lazarus, at the request of Mary and Martha. In the first resurrection case, and only in this case, that is the case of Jairus' daughter, Jesus touched the corpse. Touching the corpse made him ritually unclean. In the other two cases, Jesus did not touch them. He simply said, "Young man I say to you arise", or "Lazarus, come out." We might wonder why Jesus chose to violate the laws for ritual purity in helping a woman, but not a man.

Jesus approached women not as sex objects as other people did in his time. When Jesus was invited for dinner at the house of a Pharisee (Luke 7: 36ff), a woman of ill repute entered and washed Jesus' feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair and anointed them. The Pharisee saw her as an evil sexual creature and Jesus rebuked him and spoke of her love, her sin, her being forgiven and her faith. Jesus spoke to her as a human being. "Your sins are forgiven. ... Your faith has saved you, go in peace." Jesus treated a woman who was accused of adultery and commanded to be stoned to death in the same way. He treated her as a human being, saying to the accusers, "If there is one of

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[26] Joanna Dewey, *Disciples of the Way: Mark On Discipleship*, Women's Division Board of Global Ministries The United Methodist Church, 1976, 127.

[27] Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the gospel, who will not receive a hundred times now in this age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and fields – with persecutions – and in the age to come, eternal life (Mark 10: 29-30).

you who has not sinned, let him be first to throw a stone at her," and to the accused women he said with compassion, "'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one Lord.' And Jesus said, neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again.'"

4. Women as Disciples

We shall look more closely at the Gospels to see how they portray women in relation to Jesus.

One of the characteristics of discipleship, as described above, is service. In the case of women we can find at least two stories in the gospel of Mark where Jesus praises individual women who demonstrate the way of service. We can see from the stories in the Gospel how the actions of women stand out as the only instances in which individual actions are given Jesus' explicit approval. The first story is as follows:

> And sitting down opposite the temple treasury, he watched how the crowd was giving money to the treasury. And many rich people gave a great deal. And one poor widow came, and put in two copper coins, that is a penny. And summoning the disciples, he said to them, "Truly I say to you this poor widow has given more than all the people who have given to the treasury. For they all gave out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has given everything she had, her whole living" (Mark 12: 41-44).

We can infer from the above story how Jesus formally summons his disciples to point out the good example of the woman and to teach them that her gift was in fact greater than the gifts of all other people put together. The rich gave only what they had left over; the woman on the other hand gave all that she had. She has truly given of herself, "she has followed the command to deny herself. She trusts in God to provide."[28]

The second story is as follows:

> And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was eating, a woman came, having with her a small bottle of ointment of pure nard, very expensive. She broke the bottle and poured it over his head. Some of the people there were saying to each other indignantly, "What was the reason for this waste of the ointment? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor." And they scolded her but Jesus said, "Let her be, why are you causing her trouble? She has done a fine deed to me. What she had in her power, she did; she has anointed my body ahead of time in preparation for burial. Truly I say to you,

[28] Dewey, *Disciples*, 128.

> wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, also what she has done will be told in memory of her" (Mark 14: 3-9).

Almost the same story is told in Luke, where a woman is overcome by emotion and weeps on Jesus' feet. In the midst of emotion, perhaps forgetting that it was improper, she quickly anoints Jesus' feet with her hair, both a clear violation of rabbinic custom of propriety and the laws of clean and unclean. Jesus rebukes his host, a Pharisee, for his lack of hospitality in not anointing Jesus' head with oil, saying:

> "You see this woman: when I came to your house you did not perform for me the gestures of gracious host – foot washing, the kiss of greeting, or the anointing of my head with oil. By contrast, this woman, whose sins are indeed many, bathed my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. Since I came in, she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, yet she has anointed my feet with perfume" (Luke 7: 46).

In both stories we can see how Jesus defended the women and told the people to leave them alone. Jesus praises the women's acts as a lovely and good work. "Not only is Jesus willing to accept the touch of a sinful woman, but even suggests that her action is more welcome to him than of his host."[29] In this story we also can see a clear example of the reverse – a sinful woman is praised at the expense of and by comparison to a 'good' Jewish man. It should be noted that what a woman did was a true and beautiful act of service. Both of those women's acts of service in Mark were set as a contrast to the expected fidelity of the male disciples.

There is even general agreement with regard to the Gospel of Mark that the male disciples' performance is rather dismal.[30] Male disciples repeatedly fail to understand Jesus' teaching on the true nature of his Messiahship and mission, and of their own discipleship. "By contrast, the Markan Women, who are genuine disciples by Gospel's own definition (they follow, minister and 'come with Jesus'), often take the initiative, and consistently demonstrate bold and active faith."[31] Marla Schlerling[32] and John Schmitt even posit that women

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[29] Howard Marshall, The Gospel of Luke. A Commentary on the Greek Text, Exeter 1978, 310, cited by Ben Witherington III, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus. A Study of Jesus' Attitudes to Women and their Roles as Reflected in His Earthly Life*, London 1984, 56.

[30] For further discussion cf. Ernest Best, *Disciple and Discipleship. Studies in the Gospel According to Mark*, Edinburgh 1986; Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her. A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origin*, London 1995, and id., *Discipleship of Equals. A Critical Feminist Ekklessialogy of Liberation*, London 1993.

[31] Margaret M Beirne, *Women and Men in the Fourth Gospel. A Genuine Discipleship of Equals*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament, Supplement Series 242, Sheffield 2003.

characters provide a positive model of discipleship over against the negative model of male disciples.[33]

Although Mark portrays women with Jesus right from the beginning of his ministry to his death, yet almost all women's interactions and conversations with him are invisible. According to Schüssler-Fiorenza, in this case we may infer that Markan generic words indicating the wider circle of the followers such as 'thus who were around him' (4.10) and 'the crowd' must actually be meant to include both male and female.[34] Additionally, women's discipleship in Mark, especially their 'following' and 'serving' can be understood only within his whole description of what disciple means.

Another account which infers the act of discipleship among women can also be seen from the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10: 38-42. Scholars argue whether this story is idealized or legendary, but according to Ben Witherington, it is more probable that this story has a sound basis in historical fact, and Luke has written and presented the story in his own language and style.[35] The role of Mary and the task Jesus performs in this story in contrast to what was expected of Jewish men and women is of the significant mission. While Mary is taking on the not so traditional role of disciple, Martha is engaged in providing hospitality for her guest. But Martha was complaining and accusing Mary of neglecting her when she needed her help. Jesus' response is neither an attempt to devalue Martha's effort at hospitality, nor an attempt to attack a woman's traditional role, "rather He defends Mary's rights to learn from him and says this is the crucial thing for those who wish to serve him."[36] It is clear from this narrative that, in Jesus' view, for women as well as men, one's primary task is to be a proper disciple and only in that context can one be a proper hostess. It is also clear that this narrative is not a matter of contrasting the active to the contemplative life; rather, it is a matter of contrasting the im-

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5. Both Malbon, Fallible Followers: Women and Men in the Gospel of Mark, in: *Semeia* 28, 1983, 29-48 and Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, mentions the same thing.

[32] Marla Schlerling, Women as Leaders in the Markan Communities, in: *Listening* 15, 1980, 250-256.

[33] Cf., John Schmitt, Women in Mark's Gospel, An Early Christian View of Women's Role, in: *The Bible Today* 19, 1981, 228-233 cited by Malbon, Fallible Followers, 33.

[34] Schüssler-Fiorenza, In Memory of Her, 320, also cited by Hisako Kinukawa, Women Disciples of Jesus (15. 40-41; 15. 47; 16.1), in: *A Feminist Companion to Mark*, Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff (eds), England 2001, 175.

[35] Ben III Witherington, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus. A study of Jesus' Attitudes to Women and their Roles as Reflected in His Earthly Life*, London 1984, 101.

[36] Ibid.

portance of listening to and learning the word of God to anything else. And here Luke portrays Mary as a disciple sitting and learning at the feet of Jesus, her Master. She is a disciple who has the right to learn from Jesus.

The Gospel of Luke includes women in the community of discipleship. It is one of the consequences of Jesus' call, which emphasizes the marginalized. Luke mentioned that women also follow the example of Jesus; they function as missionaries (Acts 8: 8, 26). Women are traveling with Jesus (Luke 8: 1-3). Thus, if as strictly defined, discipleship required following Jesus physically, women can be included as disciples. This was the case for Joana, the wife of Chuza. Besides her presence with Mary at the tomb and in the upper room, and thereafter bearing witness, she had left her home and family to become a follower and traveling companion of Jesus.

In Luke, it also seems that there is no difference in rank within the community of discipleship. The most important thing is service. Service refers to Christian preaching and missionary work. Church leaders must behave as servants.

Although there is no campaign in Luke-Acts on sexual abstinence or any indication that marriage is an inferior way of following Jesus, throughout much of Christian history, the married state has been seen as inferior to the celibate state. Although Luke also portrays a married pair as the ideal missionary couple (Acts 18: 2, 18, 26).

With the Greco-Roman setting, Matthew in his Gospel "struggles to incorporate women moving from the periphery to greater involvement and from being victims and survivors to being disciples and leaders".[37] Indeed, in Matthew we find women used as important images. Matthew 2: 18 for example, portrays Rachel as image of Israel. In Matthew 13: 33 a woman with leaven is an image of God; in Matthew 21: 5 a woman is the daughter of Zion; and in Matthew 23: 37 Jerusalem is portrayed as a Mother.

Matthew also seems to contrast the faith of the women to the faith of the male disciples. When on the one hand Jesus accuses the disciple as having little faith, he praises the faith of women, on the other.[38]

Matthew uses several phrases to express the concept of discipleship, such as "he called them" (4: 21), "come after me" (4: 19), "fol-

[37] Jane Kopas, Jesus and Women in Matthew, in: *Theology Today* 47, 1990, 13-21, cited by Parambi Baby, VC, *The Discipleship of the Women in the Gospel according to Matthew. An Exegetical Theological Study of Matthew 27: 51c-56, 57-61 and 28: 1-10*, Rome 2003.

[38] Cf. Matthew 8: 26 and 9: 22.

low me" (9: 9), "follow after me" (10: 38), "follow me" (16: 24; 8: 22), "come after me" (16: 24).

As stated above, there are two significant characteristics of the discipleship of Jesus, a call from Jesus and a literal or physical following behind Jesus. In order to refer to both a call from Jesus as well as a response to the call, Matthew uses the word "to follow". "The New Testament uses this word as one of the technical words designating the discipleship of Jesus."[39]

In the case of women disciples, Matthew's story can be found in the story of the women witnesses to the death of Jesus. Those women formed the group that followed Jesus from Galilee (Matthew 27: 55-56). This verse is the only reference in Matthew that speaks clearly about the women as "followers" of Jesus.[40] Here Matthew uses the same vocabulary for women "followers" with the male "disciples". The problem discussed by scholars is, does these women's following of Jesus indicate their discipleship of Jesus? According to Matthew, when disciples followed Jesus it was definitely in response to a direct call from Jesus (4: 19, 4: 21, 9: 9). In the case of women, however, Matthew does not specify that they followed Jesus in response to a direct call from Jesus. Nevertheless, "whether or not Jesus called the women to follow him, their action of following Jesus resembles the male disciples' action of following him (4: 20, 22; 9: 9)."[41] Thus, even though there is no direct call from Jesus, the reality that women continued to follow Jesus implies certain elements of discipleship. According to Baby, this fact can be supported further by two factors in the Gospel: first, the place where the women started following Jesus (from Galilee), which makes them Galileans, and second from the words "to service".

Baby argues that Jesus was from Nazareth of Galilee, the place where Jesus started his ministry, calling his first disciple. According to John 1: 46, 7: 52, the Jews (Jesus' original community) who lived in Galilee were considered inferior to the pious Jews of Jerusalem. Thus, the disciples of Jesus who are identified as Galileans are also marginal people. Women were the same as those who followed Jesus from Galilee. D. Senior argues that discipleship consists in taking part in

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[39] Baby, *The Discipleship*, 108.
[40] C.S. Keener, *Matthew*, Leicester 1997, 689.
[41] Baby, *The Discipleship*, 129.

the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem.[42]; since women had followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem, then, women can also be called disciples.

In addition, women's presence at the cross and later at the tomb shows that they followed Jesus continuously. "Although Matthew does not call them disciples, unmistakable discipleship implications are certainly undeniable. The following of Jesus is fundamental to the discipleship of Jesus."[43]

The second essential element of discipleship is service, as also stated before. Following Jesus is serving Jesus unto his death. This is what the women have done for Jesus. Service marks the true characteristic of a follower of Jesus (Matthew 20: 27-28).

Thus, it can be concluded that even though Matthew does not call women disciples, their continued following of Jesus give them certain discipleship qualities. Besides that, the Matthean burial narrative on verses 27: 57-61 also contains elements of male and female discipleship. The women who were sitting in front of the tomb are also examples of faithful disciples from a different point of view. Matthew's definition of the disciples of Jesus is not limited to the twelve male disciples around him. This includes Matthew's description of a rich man called Joseph of Arimathea, who was called a disciple of Jesus.

The gospel of Mark even tells us that after Jesus had been arrested and the twelve have fled, after Jesus has been tried and condemned and Peter has denied him, after Jesus has been crucified and died, Jesus had women disciples, who had indeed been following him all along.

> Women were watching (the crucifixion) from a distance, among them Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome who, when Jesus was in Galilee, followed him and served him: and many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem (Mark 15: 40-41).

From this we can see that women seem to have been among the large group of disciples since the beginning of Jesus' ministry in Galilee. They were with him, too, like the twelve. Women, unlike men disciples, do not flee when Jesus is arrested. They remain faithful. "The women had not failed Jesus as the men did, they have not betrayed him or denied him, and they have not fled. They are going to

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[42] Donald Senior, *The Passion Narrative according to Matthew. A Redactional Study*, Leuven 1975, 331.

[43] Baby, *The Discipleship*.132.

the tomb to give Jesus the last service they know how to offer, to perform the appropriate burial rites."[44] Parambi Baby states: "In the absence of male disciples, Matthew presents the women headed by Mary Magdalene as true discipleship models. They have followed Jesus from Galilee, serving him."[45] Thus, when the world had turned to darkness and all others had abandoned Jesus, the women were still standing there. Who were these women? These were Galilean women who had followed Jesus up to Jerusalem. Here Mark uses the word 'following' (*akolouthon*), which is the technical biblical word for discipleship, as stated before. In this story we learn of an entire group of women who had left their homes and country and followed Jesus to the end. In this case Luke 8: 1-3 confirms Mark's story of women disciples accompanying Jesus.

The fourth Gospel also portrays women as among those who "while not explicitly identified as 'the disciples', nevertheless satisfy the Gospel's criteria for discipleship."[46] It provides a positive representation of women disciples. It even presents women disciples as of equal standing with men. This Gospel consistently portrayed women and men in literary partnership, as disciples, in ministerial and apostolic leadership, and as a catalyst for driving the Gospel's central purpose.[47] Unlike in the Markan Gospel, in the fourth Gospel women and men disciples alike are exemplary in their faith, insight, witness and loyalty. In the portrayal of major men and women believers, according to R. E. Brown, there is no difference of intelligence, vividness, or response.[48] They are gender pairs. It can be concluded that the Johannine Gospel is supporting the essentially inclusive discipleship. It "maintains gender difference but demonstrates 'equality' by the structural balancing of male and female characters."[49]

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[44] Dewey, *Disciples*, 133.

[45] Baby, *The Discipleship*, 207.

[46] Beirne, *Women and Men*, 7. Anderson says that this interpretation depends on whether 'discipleship' is viewed as a membership in the character group 'the disciple' or as a proper response to belief in Jesus.' Cf., Janice Capel Anderson, Matthew: Gender and Reading, in: *Semeia* 28, 1983, 3-27. I agree with Beirne in choosing the later meaning to define a Johannine 'disciple', even though at times the expression 'the disciples' refers to an inner group. I also agree with her in her proposal for the methodology that is genuinely inclusive and looks for a balance of women and men.

[47] Cf. Verse 20:31.

[48] Raymond E Brown, *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind*, New York 1984, 94, cited by Beirne, *Women and Men*, 9.

[49] Beirne, *Women and Men*, 33.

Thus, Jesus' teaching and actions, and also the relationship he was involved in and the events surrounding his death and burial led to the acceptance of women as valid witnesses and genuine disciples of Jesus.

Conclusion

Female authority is not denied in the most important core of Christian Scripture. Women were in the broadest sense of the word 'disciples' of Jesus and they share the responsibility to preach the Gospel. In my understanding, even if it is true that Jesus never called women as disciples, and even though he never appointed women to become apostles, it does not mean that Jesus prohibited women to be included in Jesus' ministry as disciples or apostles. Jesus lived and thought within the cultural context of his age.

Being Christian is to follow Jesus Christ as the Way (*imitatio Christi*). To follow Jesus Christ as the Way means to be with him where he is and to do what he did and is doing. Orthopraxy has priority over orthodoxy, and both need to be contextually performed.

There are ample examples from the Gospel stories elaborated above concerning Jesus' attitude to women and showing that Jesus was a feminist. His treatment of women with a revolutionary equality even shocked the masculine prejudice of his disciples.

While Christianity is not a monolithic religion, in order to understand Jesus' mission and teaching, it is not enough to understand the Gospel literally. A new understanding is needed in addition, to transcend our apparently limiting sociological and historical necessity. We are often unaware of the extent to which we are bound by sociological, cultural and historical circumstances, and this makes us see them as absolute

There is also no justification in the words or in the acts of Jesus Christ for the exclusion of women from any spiritual office. That standard is available in the Gospels and in the examples from Jesus.

Life cannot exist without the polarity of men and women. So too sexual differentiation has to be understood within the category of relation. Women and men as they are, are the products of complex social relations, which are constantly in flux. They have a continuing history. This is true for the Christian tradition, and is likewise true for the Islamic tradition. The Prophet dealt with his female companions on a basis of spiritual equality. Yet, in the generations after him, this equality somehow got lost, to the detriment of the Muslim community. An-

nemarie Schimmel said in her book, *My Soul is a Woman*, "when the iron and flint unite, for example, out of the 'union' of these two components arises something higher, namely fire. It is only when the masculine and the feminine elements collaborate and work together that life can ascend to higher stage. ... A Yang element and a Yin element are inseparably linked, like analysis and synthesis or like science and love."[50]

What is needed is a creative effort to develop a theological anthropology that studies the dynamic of human personality, and to develop a theology of the women-men relationship. Jesus was a person who proposed the ideal of individual allegiance to God regardless of sex, race, tribe and nation. He emphasized the equality of all people in God's eyes. Thus Jesus stands as a great example of the person we all should be.[51]

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[50] Annemarie Schimmel, *My Soul Is a Woman. The Feminine in Islam*, New York 1997, 21f.

[51] In Islamic tradition the Prophet Muhammad (PbH) is called "*uswah hasanah*," the great and best example.

Interreligious Reading Strategies.
A Case Study from the Netherlands

Gé Speelman

Larger groups of Muslims started to settle in the Netherlands in the 1970s. Besides many informal encounters between these migrants and the original Dutch population, churches and other organizations have been active almost from the onset in informal dialogue groups. Lately, many of these groups have been engaged in the joint reading of texts from the Qur'an and the Bible. This article addresses this practice of joint readings.

The topic of interreligious hermeneutics is discussed in some publications.[1] The meaning of the term is not always clear however. Martha Frederiks distinguishes two meanings: 'Interreligious Hermeneutics' as a way of interpreting the text, or as a way of interpreting the encounter with the other. When it refers to the text, one can further distinguish between:

1. Re-interpreting Christian Scripture in the light of the encounter with the religious other.
2. Employing the same hermeneutical methods across religious boundaries, like feminist or liberation hermeneutics, or hermeneutics of suspicion, by people of different faith traditions.
3. The theory of understanding texts and contexts across religious boundaries.

[1] David Cheetham, et al. (eds). *Interreligious Hermeneutics in Pluralistic Europe. Between Texts and People*. Amsterdam and New York 2011.

If one uses the term as an interpretation of the nature of the encounter, one could see the stranger, the other as being the text 'read' by me.[2]

For people experienced in the practice of interreligious encounter, it is clear that there is no ironclad boundary between these different meanings. When Christians are, for instance, engaged in encounter with Muslims, they start reading their own Scripture in a new light. Texts about the encounter with outsiders abound in the Bible, and these texts can acquire new meaning in the light of these encounters. This may go hand in hand with the reflection on the meaning of the encounter itself. A new layer is being added when Christians start reading texts from Scripture together with Muslims. Here, the question of reading strategies has to be raised, as well as the question of how we can really understand the meaning of the text of the other and how the other can really learn to understand 'our' text. These questions come as it were on top of other questions about the religious interpretation of the encounter with people of a different faith.

In this article, a study is made of the way Scriptural texts are employed in interreligious encounter between Christians and Muslims in the Netherlands. The central question is: in what ways are participants sharing texts from the Bible and the Qur'an? What are questions that arise out of this praxis? And how are these questions being dealt with by the participants?

Sharing of Scripture[3] can be done in different ways. Sometimes, prayer texts or spiritual quotes from Scripture are brought in marginally into a conversation in some other field. Sometimes, stories from the Bible and the Qur'an are the subject of conversation. Sometimes, normative texts from Bible and Qur'an are studied together in a conversation about peace or reconciliation. In whatever way it is done, people in interreligious encounter sometimes read texts from both traditions together and exchange interpretations of these texts. I want to look at their experiences, and bring these experiences into conversation with some of the current debates about interreligious hermeneutics. So, my focus is on the way people learn to understand the texts from their own Scripture and texts of the 'other' Scripture, their read-

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[2] Martha Frederiks: Hermeneutics from an interreligious perspective?, in: *Exchange 34*, 2005, 102-110.

[3] I prefer the use of the term 'Scripture' for texts that are held to be sacred by a religious community. This implies that for Muslims, for instance, sometimes texts from the Hadith may as well function as Scripture. For a reasoned discussion of the meaning of the term, cf. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *What is Scripture? A Comparative Approach*, Philadelphia 1993.

ing strategies. These reading strategies can eventually be linked to different ideas in the field of interreligious hermeneutics, but they are not always articulated explicitly. Yet, it makes sense to connect reading strategies in practice to more reasoned debates about the scope and meaning of interreligious hermeneutics. That is, I refer back to the third meaning of 'interreligious hermeneutics' as a way of interpreting texts.

1. Interreligious hermeneutics: three approaches – two dilemmas

In this more narrowly defined field, one can distinguish the approach of Scriptural Reasoning[4], that of Comparative Theology[5] and the approach of feminist theologians set down in the thesis of Anne Hege Grung.[6] Without entering into an evaluative debate about the merits of these approaches[7], I appreciate that there are at least two topics that appear to be pertinent to all three approaches, and that seem to address some of the basic questions and implicit problems arising out of the dialogue practice of interreligious groups in the Netherlands.
I will briefly mention them:

The 'outsiders/insiders' dilemma
To whom does the text belong? Obviously, to the community that considers this text to be indeed Scripture. So, the Bible is 'owned' by the Christians participating in a dialogue group and the Qur'an is 'owned' by the Muslims. This is important, because there is always so much more than the words of the Bible and the Qur'an written on paper. The Scriptures themselves can only be understood, believers will claim, in the context of the way in which they function in living communities. The text is always vulnerable to the misunderstandings of outsiders. It has to be protected and cherished by the insiders. One of

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[4] Cf. David Ford and C.C. Pecknold. *The Promise of Scriptural Reasoning*. Cambridge 2006. Cf. also the website of the Society for Scriptural Reasoning: http://www.scripturalreasoning.org/.

[5] Cf. Francis Xavier Clooney. *Comparative Theology. Deep Learning across Religious Boundaries*. London 2010.

[6] Anne Hege Grung. *Gender Justice in Christian-Muslim Readings*. https://www.uio.no/forskning /tverrfak/culcom/publikasjoner/doktoravhandlinger/2011/Avhandling-Grung.pdf.

[7] For an interesting debate about the merits and demerits of Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Theology, cf.: David Cheetham et al. (eds). *Interreligious Hermeneutics in Pluralistic Europe. Between Texts and People*. Amsterdam and New York 2011 [proceedings of the ESITIS conference in 2009 in Salzburg]; Francis X. Clooney (ed.). *The New Comparative Theology. Interreligious Insights from the Next Generation*. London and New York 2010; Catherine Cornille and Christopher Conway (eds). *Interreligious Hermeneutics*. Eugene 2010.

the clear rules of the Scriptural Reasoning groups is that the Muslim participants explain the Qur'anic text in terms of the Islamic tradition, and the Jewish and Christian participants explain the Bible in terms of Christian/ Jewish exegesis and doctrine.[8] Also, in Comparative Theology the readers from the outside have to pay careful attention to the tradition of explanation of the text by insiders to the community.[9] But can we draw such a clear boundary between outside and inside? One of the problems is that in different ways, this clear-cut distinction between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' of the text does not work in interfaith groups. Sometimes there is a problem of power difference. Then, the dominant group (in the Dutch context usually the Christians) lays down the principles of interpretation for the whole group. They set their own rules as the standard. Another problem is that sometimes, the members of the group feel hesitant to claim 'ownership' of the tradition in question. Some women, for instance, would feel reluctant to set up as specialist in text exegesis in their own tradition. They do not feel like an 'owner' of the Qur'an or the Bible; these books are 'owned' by religious specialists.[10] It is for this reason that feminists working in interfaith groups are critical of the too clear, too pat distinction between 'outsiders' and 'insiders'. Then again, there are interfaith groups where the boundaries between insiders and outsiders begin to be blurred. Think of some groups that share readings in mystical traditions. For them, the boundaries may not be between Muslims and Christians, but between the more orthodox members of their faith tradition and themselves. In such groups, it may happen that the members of the group assume a sort of 'joint ownership' of both (mystical) traditions. However it may be approached, there is need of awareness of the outsider-insider dilemma if one wants to avoid frustration on the part of the readers. The dilemma is a dilemma because the motivation for participants in interfaith groups is often the wish to build up a relationship with persons who are viewed as outsiders in their own

[8] http://www.scripturalreasoning.org/pdfs/organise.pdf (consulted 11 january 2013) gives a set of rules for the setting-up of a group. Here it is stated: 'For example Muslims and Jews tend to read their scriptures more from within their respective traditions (using tafsir and midrash), whereas Christians are more familiar with the moves of historical criticism. The key thing is that the reading is authentic to the presenter and his or her traditional way of reading the scripture.'

[9] Clooney, 2011, 141.

[10] Women and other people marginal in the community are sometimes referred to as 'outsider within', cf. Michelle Voss Roberts, Gendering Comparative Theology in: Clooney, *The New Comparative Theology*, 116.

religious community (they want to change 'outsiders' into 'insiders'), whereas when they participate in these meetings, they have to assume the role of 'insiders' to their own community. The question could thus be formulated: how can we build a new group of insiders, the dialogue participants, and at the same time remain insiders in our own religious communities? How can we be loyal both ways?

The similarity / difference dilemma

Lately, there has been much criticism by people engaged in dialogue of the earlier generation of dialogue theologians, who seemed to claim that all religions are paths to the same goal. This is felt to be a too easy and superficial attempt to equalize traditions that are, in fact, quite different.[11] In contrast to these earlier, liberal theologies, in Scriptural Reasoning, the particularity of each tradition is one of the basic principles.[12] In the debate with liberal theologians, the advocates of Scriptural Reasoning argue that differences between Muslims, Jews and Christians are deep and permanent. Moreover, a common ground is not required in order to engage in dialogue. It may be a possible outcome, but not a precondition. Understanding is privileged above agreement. The outcome of the shared reading of Scripture may be a higher quality disagreement, and not so much agreement. The aim of the practice of shared reading is not to reach a consensus, but to experience friendship and collegiality.[13] This point of view has been criticized by feminist theologians. Helene Egnell argues that the insistence on the incommensurability of traditions may lead to essentializing discourses: the great diversity within Christianity or Islam is somehow lost in the attempt to set each of them these down as unique traditions.[14] Anne Hege Grung devotes part of the second chapter of her book to a discussion of the implications of this privileging of difference. She comes to the conclusion that there is less space for internal differences within the community (like differences between young and old, men and women) if 'difference' is defined in terms of religious

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[11] Cf Gavin d'Costa (ed.), *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered. The Myth of Religious Pluralism*. Maryknoll 1990, and George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine. Religion and Theology in a Post-Liberal Age*. Philadelphia 1984.

[12] About the connections between Scriptural Reasoning and Postliberal theology, cf. Marianne Moyaert, Comparative Theology in search of a hermeneutical framework, in: Cheetham and Winkler, *Interreligious Hermeneutics*, 161-185.

[13] Nicholas Adams, Scriptural Reasoning and Interfaith Hermeneutics, in: Cheetham, *Interreligious Hermeneutics*, 59-82.

[14] Helene Egnell, Scriptural Reasoning – a Feminist Response, in: Cheetham, *Interreligious Hermeneutics*, 79-82.

belonging.[15] There is another problem why the approach of postliberal forms of theology that want to stress the differences between religious traditions can be problematic in the actual encounter. In the experience of existing dialogue groups, there is also a permanent need to affirm basic similarities, especially at the beginning of the encounter. This can create mutual trust and understanding. The dilemma could then be formulated as follows: how and where do you stress similarity and how and where do you need to guard particularity, and how are these moments related to the need to be respectful and faithful to both traditions?

2. Focus Group Meeting

In order to get an idea of what is happening in the field of the interreligious reading of Bible and Qur an, the Islam-desk of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands organized two meetings in the years 2011 and 2012. In these meetings, Muslim and Christian participants in different interreligious groups came together to discuss their practices and to learn from each other. The organizers had sent a small questionnaire to the groups beforehand. Some of the groups who could not attend the meetings nevertheless sent in filled in questionnaires.[16] The first meeting brought local and regional dialogue groups together, as well as some people who try to promote interreligious reading by publications and social media. About the second meeting, meant exclusively for women's groups, I will report in another article.

In the first plenary session of the focus group meeting, I interviewed a number of representative groups, chosen on the basis of variety in approach that emerged from the questionnaire.[17] In the afternoon the representatives of the groups came together in subgroups, organized in accordance with the differences in approach. In the reports of the discussion groups, the same topics were again addressed, and they were finally discussed in the plenary session at the end. Experts in the dialogue field were asked to reflect on the experiences brought into the groups and from each group, a written report was

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[15] Anne Hege Grung, *Gender Justice in Muslim-Christian Readings. Christian and Muslim Women in Norway Making Meaning of Texts from the Bible, the Koran, and the Hadith*, Oslo 2011, 60-67.

[16] In the Appendix, there is a list of the groups invited and the questionnaire.

[17] Cf. the topic list I addressed in the interviews (annex).

made that highlighted the main topics.[18] I will begin with a presentation of the groups that were interviewed in the plenary session.

The Bible and Qur'an project

This project was started by the Interchurch broadcasting company IKON. Since 2007, they have hosted the website 'Bible and Qur'an' (www.bijbelenkoran.nl) that gives visitors access to the texts of both communities. These texts are searchable, but the website also offers stories that are parallel. One of the contributors to the website, Marlies ter Borg, has, in collaboration with Islamic publicist Karima Bisschop, made a comparison of Biblical and Qur'anic narratives presented on the website; this has resulted in the publication of a book, *Sharing Mary*. Marlies and Karima try to tell the stories 'just as they are', without having recourse to the exegetical traditions. In the discussion it emerged however that it is almost impossible to read the narratives without interpretation. What also emerged was the question of how one can enter into a conversation with real life communities when making use of a website and a book. Although they get many reactions from visitors to the site, it is not possible to channel them into real life meetings.

Daughters of Hagar and Sara, Province of North Holland

This is a group of Jewish, Christian and Muslim women meeting regularly.[19] Their aim is to take responsibility for a sustainable and just society and the improvement of their position as women. They share similar experiences of motherhood and relationships.[20] Their meetings are an exercise in diversity. Sharing texts from their own tradition has been a difficult process. Time and again they experienced their being together as a group as a fragile and vulnerable process. They have become aware that power differences exist between the communities. Jewish and Muslim women have to take on the Christian frame of reference when they want to explain the meaning of texts and words, as this is the more accepted common framework. Another experience

[18] Linda Borst (ed), *Verslag Expertmeeting Bijbel en Koran Groepen*, Maandag 21 november 2011, Protestants Landelijk Dienstencentrum te Utrecht (unpublished paper).

[19] http://www.hagar-sarah.nl .

[20] Helene Egnell, *Other voices. A Study of Christian Feminist Approaches to Religious Plurality East and West*, Uppsala 2006. Egnell distinguishes women's dialogue groups that take their common ground in the shared experiences that refer back to the traditional role of women and groups that take their starting point in an emancipatory or feminist orientation; in this group it seems there is an overlap of both

is that there are difficult issues between their communities. The situation in the Middle East is an example. They are aware that some differences of opinion cannot be harmonized or resolved. For a real exchange, they need to create a sense of safety. One of the rules they employ in order to achieve this is that they speak in the 'I' form: 'I experience this text in such and such a way, and how do you read it?' They try to connect the texts to their *personal* context. By operating in such a way, they sometimes feel a tension between their loyalties to their religious community and their loyalty to the group and to themselves. They gradually came to realize that their interpretation of the texts is never just an individual exercise; some of the women have really deepened their knowledge of the traditional interpretations of Scripture in their community in order to explain the texts to the others.

Male Dialogue Group Rotterdam

This group is organized around the personal friendship of Protestant pastor Martijn van Laar and Muslim theologian Alper Alasag. They meet regularly as an informal group of male friends. Sometimes they talk about personal stories and preferences, like the time each one brought the music that inspired him. Sometimes, they discuss a topic, like the education of their children, the meaning of prayer or of faith. Every topic is prepared beforehand by a Muslim and a Christian. They often read texts from both Scriptures that deal with the topic in hand. All men are committed believers in their religious tradition and they are all highly educated. This group has also struggled with the real and deep differences in their religious outlook and experience. When it comes to Jesus, for instance, the disagreements can block conversation. There are other areas, however, where there is much more overlap and mutual recognition. When they speak about prayer and what it means to them, they come very close to each other, and this helps them to develop the mutual trust necessary to discuss the more difficult issues.

Christian-Muslim Coffee Meetings Amsterdam

This group meets regularly in a Community Centre in the multicultural neighborhoods of Amsterdam-West. This is not a stable group; everyone who lives in the neighborhood is welcome, and the participants shift with every meeting, although there is a small core group that plans the meeting and decides the topics, things like the celebration of Ramadan or Christmas. The idea is that ordinary people can get an-

swers to their [illegible] they [illegible]
they live and why [illegible] make the choices they do? Because the group wants to welcome everybody, the information is often rather basic and superficial. [illegible] members of the group (among them a Protestant pastor and a young, well educated Muslim woman) serve a[s] informers of the group. They are also the referees when the debates heat up, like the times that a young female convert to Islam, with hijab and all dressed in black, used the meetings as a platform for her propaganda of the 'true faith'. Also, the core members can deconstruct many of the religious differences the neighborhood people have constructed.

Abraham House Genk (Belgium)

This is a group supported by the local churches, especially the Roman Catholic church, and the local mosque organizations, especially the Turkish mosque. In 1990/1 (first Gulf War), representatives of these communities came together to pray for peace. Still, the most important meeting of the group is the yearly Peace Vigil on October 4th (St. Francis Day), where representatives of the communities organize a large meeting, usually in the local mosque, where they share texts from both Scriptures, as well as religious poetry and music. This is a yearly apex, but there are other shared activities the year through, like the shared participation in a house for the homeless and projects to fight local poverty. The year round, some one hundred volunteers see each other regularly in the 'Abraham house'. The use of texts from Scripture is not confined to the Peace Vigil. As the religious leaders of the community are much involved in the Abraham house, they are the ones who often decide what topics and texts are addressed. They try to look for texts that deal with hospitality, generosity and peace, and they avoid texts about difference.

3. Type of Group/Rules of Behavior

From the above description, it can be seen that the focus of these groups is different. On the basis of the preliminary questionnaire, we decided to divide them into four types. The central interest of the group is decisive for the use of texts. We also discovered that each type of group had their own rules of behavior, often connected to the central interest of the group. Sometimes these rules were very explicit and outspoken, sometimes not. In the analysis of the material brought

in by the groups, I tried to identify what Paolo Freire calls the 'generative themes' around which the group had organized itself.[21]

Story-centered groups

These groups (sometimes individuals) were fascinated by the similarities between biblical and Qur'anic narratives. In different ways, these narratives were explored. Some participants were more aware than others of the interpretative work that is done in the presentation of the stories. Another difference is the meaning they attach to the stories. For some, every biblical and Qur'anic [illegible] is first and foremost to be taken in a metaphorical way as a part of the story of human lives. The suffering of Hagar alone in the [illegible] or the pain of Abraham Ibrahim who has to sacrifice his son [illegible] was recognizable as forms of pain and suffering that may take place in their lives. For others, however, this was not so evident. Respect for the text and for the characters in the story made an easy identification more difficult. In the groups, the wisdom was that one had to make a place for this difference in the approaches of the text. Some groups discovered that things started to move when these points of difference in the hermeneutical approach were explored in a respectful way. If there was sufficient trust there was also space for participants to connect the narratives of Scripture to their individual life stories, and even to discuss the pain and vulnerability of their religious community vis-à-vis the other community. Stories were a good way to come to this trust building, as many readers were able to identify with them. Again, this was experienced by the groups as an opening up and a deepening of the understanding of the texts. One might formulate as a rule: the respect for differences in approach can help the group to reach deeper levels of understanding. '*Respect*' was frequently brought up, and can be considered as a hermeneutical key for the shared understanding of Scripture.

Community-centered groups

A good example is the Belgian group. Here, community leaders were the founders of the group, and made themselves responsible for its continuation. In these groups, the rules were more explicit. Some rules had to do with respect for particularity and difference. For instance: when there was a joint prayer meeting for peace, participants would listen to the prayers of the other communities, but would not partici-

[21] Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York 1972.

pate actively in them. The leaders of the community would have to guard their role as representatives of their community. The discovery was that the boundaries between communities would sometimes be more porous than assumed. One imam for instance brought up the possibility that he could participate in the Roman Catholic choir, as he loved singing. On the whole, the leaders were careful in their boundary-crossing activities. They could not go further than their communities would allow them. In a way, this could be seen as a limitation of the activities of the group. They would function best when people were engaged on a practical level, sharing the care for the homeless, the poor, or gathering money after the earthquake in Turkey. On the other hand, the fact that they were engaged as religious leaders made a broad participation of old and young people possible. When it came to the joint readings of Scripture, there was the same awareness that one should respect the differences and be careful about boundary crossing. One aspect mentioned many times over was the fear on the part of Christians that they might abuse their power to set the frame of reference for the meetings. If such community-wide activities want to succeed, there must be absolute clarity that each community is the 'owner' of their own tradition and Scripture. '*Mutual hospitality*' was a key word, bringing together the notions of openness, generosity and respect.

Daily-life-centered groups

These are groups of people sharing the same space (neighborhood, street, village) and where the aim of the group meetings is to build a sense of community. One example among many is the group operating in Amsterdam. In these groups, there was generally a tension between the small core-group of organizers (sometimes, like in Amsterdam, consisting only of one Muslim and one Christian), who possess more knowledge and experience in interreligious encounter, and the occasional or regular visitors of the meeting. In these groups, '*diversity*' was the key word. Most visitors did not identify with existing church or mosque communities, and many had only very basic knowledge of the tenets of 'their' faith. If the aims of the core-members, like building trust in the neighborhood, were to be met, this required skillful operating and the employment of a great variety of methods and topics. An absolute must for the success of neighborhood groups is that there is already a great amount of mutual trust and respect between the members of the core group. These people also needed skills in the

management of the inner diversity of the more casual visitors. They had to take the input of these visitors seriously by involving them in the agenda of future meetings. This could lead to a sense of discontinuity: one week, the visitors could be debating the birth stories of Jesus and Muhammad, reading texts from Scripture together, and the next week they might be exchanging recipes for meals. Core members needed to be able to handle this discontinuity by their awareness of the main target of the meetings. Also, they had to be able to defuse possible conflicts between more 'strict' and more 'liberal' Muslims and Christians. Because of the differences in level in the group, there were also differences of power in deciding about the future of the group. Organizers of the group needed to be aware of this.

Most of the explicit rules in these groups had to do with the need to remind all participants of the mutual respect they owed to other group members. In order to build trust in the local community, they aim at the discovery of points in common in spite of the great diversity of the visitors.

The reading of Scripture in such groups is therefore concentrated on the discovery of commonalities between the Bible and the Qur'an. Narratives about the prophets as well as [illegible] texts can be employed. Although the organizers may be aware of the complexity in the exegesis of such texts, this is not a topic for the visitors.

Topic-centered groups

These are groups where all members decided on a program of study or conversation on a number of topics of interest. The all-male discussion group in Rotterdam is a case in point, but so is the group 'daughters of Hagar and Sara'. These groups usually attract a membership of well educated and committed Christians and Muslims (as well as Jews, in the case of the Daughters of Hagar and Sara). They come together to discuss religious and social topics, and they frequently read Scripture texts together. In these groups, not all participants identified completely with the majority in their religious community. Many had become involved in dialogue groups precisely because they were critical of a more parochial, exclusivist community identity. Some chose a deliberately critical perspective within their community, like the 'Daughters of Hagar and Sara', who are mostly reading Scripture from a gender justice perspective.[22] This does not mean that these

[22] With Grung, I prefer this term to 'feminism', as gender justice is more inclusive. Cf. Grung, *Gender Justice*, 370.

participants are not involved in or aware of the current debates in their own mosque or church. They often experience the need to explain 'the way we are' to their conversation partners, becoming in a way interpreters of their 'own' tradition and so taking ownership of their community's frame of reference. So, where the visitors of the daily life-centered groups and the narrative-centered groups experience themselves mainly as individuals, and the participants of the community-centered groups see themselves mostly as representatives of their community, the participants of topic-centered groups take the middle ground between these alternatives. They see themselves as bridge-builders between communities. In their capacity of builders, they need to translate constantly. So, '*translation*' is the key word in the rule-book of these groups. Rules exist to prevent the more powerful from deciding upon the frame of reference, or to lay down the hermeneutical rules in the group. In some groups, for instance, there is an iron-clad rule that a Christian may never explain the Qur'an to a Muslim. The Christian may only say: 'I have the idea that Muslims explain this Qur'anic verse in this way, am I right?' Also, great attention is paid in these groups to points of disagreement and tension, as the example from the Daughters of Hagar and Sara shows. Other groups recognized the suggested approach that you talk about difficult issues in the 'I' form.

4. The Focus Groups on the dilemmas

Insider or outsider?

When one is participating in a shared reading, there is the risk of the one group being defined in opposition to the other group. You are present 'as a Muslim' or 'as a Christian', not as yourself. The communities serve as well defined units with clear-cut boundaries. What we learn from the groups [illegible] one hand, that it is very important to guard the boundaries between outsiders and insiders, and, on the other hand, that these boundaries are constantly shifting.

Sometimes, in the dialogue groups, a new 'we' would emerge: the members of the group started to experience their fellow members as an in-group. This happened most in the topic-oriented groups and in the story-telling groups. For instance, in the Daughters of Hagar and Sara, the women discovered that they shared their position as women (relationships, motherhood) as well as a certain critical stance toward

their religious communities.[23] The men in the Rotterdam group shared their position as relatively young, highly educated city dwellers, who were also committed members of their mosque or church. If a group is able to create this sort of 'common we', if they become 'insiders' to each other, the impact of the shared reading of Scripture is very great. They can learn to trust each other so well that they are able to reach new levels of understanding of the text. As one participant remarked: 'If you have a more homogeneous group, you are able to go more deeply into the text'.

This common 'we' was far less noticeable in the daily life-centered groups and the community-centered groups. In the first type of groups, there was a constant coming and going of very different persons; in the second instance, the community leaders were very careful to guard the proper boundaries between their communities. On the other hand, in a more private setting there was the possibility to build more mutual trust and a 'common we' between some members of these groups. Some of the community leaders, for instance, could have deep ties of friendship with their colleagues from across the religious boundary, and so did the [illegible] many neighborhood [illegible]. In spite of the fact that [illegible] a new 'common we' [illegible] arise, however, the group [illegible] were neverthe-[illegible] careful with the distinction [illegible] and outsiders. [illegible] had experiences with sudden [illegible] where suddenly [illegible] would be broken [illegible] of pain and vulnerability for the Daughters of Hagar and [illegible] for instance. Then the boundaries between 'Christians', Jews [illegible] 'Muslims' would shift back into position again. In such a situation, the generative themes of 'respect' for differences and 'translation' of meanings were brought in to action. The first step to deflate the possible conflict would be to respect the fact that there were differences in the group; the second step would be to translate what this topic meant for each participant personally. 'Translation' here means that the participants would not only operate as 'insiders' in their own tradition, but also assume the position of outsiders to their tradition, as they had to explain their position in terms that were understandable for their fellow group members. They would operate as 'insiders outsiders'.[24]

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[23] Although not all women would call their position 'feminist'.
[24] Cf. Farid Esack, *The Qur'an: A Short Introduction*, Oxford 2002, 3.

Sameness or difference?

For all the groups concerned, it was important that they departed from a certain 'common ground'. As was explained above, in the phase of trust building it is necessary that the group members do not experience the others as strangers with whom one has nothing in common. This did not mean that the groups considered the differences between Islam and Christianity as superficial. Yet, there were different accents in their approach to differences and commonalities. The narrative-oriented groups mostly tended to harmonize differences, but in the discussion of the stories they discovered that there were differences in the interpretation of stories between traditions. These differences were also noticeable in the way participants could identify with the characters in the narratives. For some, it would have been disrespectful to have implied criticism of a person like Moses or Abraham, whereas for others this was not so difficult. The differences that appeared beneath the surface similarities were not always discussed extensively. For the community-oriented groups, the differences between the communities were obvious. They saw these communities as 'houses' that could be visited by outside 'guests'. In the daily-life groups, there were many differences between the visitors, but it was more difficult to attach these differences exclusively to the religious background of the participants. They were perceived more as individual differences, and the inner diversity of the communities was more obvious than with the community-oriented groups. The topic-oriented groups were very much aware of differences, and they also tended to ascribe these differences partly to the religious background of the participants, and partly to the differences in cultural background.

5. The perspective of transformative hospitality

Looking back to the efforts of participants in encounter groups of Muslims and Christians in the Netherlands, we see that they are aware of both the differences and the commonalities between their Scriptures and their traditions of interpretation. Depending on the nature of each group, the generative themes 'respect', 'diversity', 'mutual hospitality' and 'translation processes' were at the centre of their way of functioning. These themes play a role in three essays by Paul Ricoeur on the process of translation.[23]

[23] Paul Ricoeur, *On Translation*, London and New York 2006.

In a way, Ricoeur argues, the translator is serving two masters at the same time: the 'foreign' author and the reader, with whom he shares the same 'native' language. The reader is resisting the idea that anything foreign can be brought in to his mother tongue, which is unique and incomparable.[26]

And it is true, each language is unique, just as each religion is. It would be betrayal to each language to assume that languages are 'more of the same'. And yet, people cross borders, seek to understand each other and start translating from one language in to the other. How can we explain the human ability to translate? Many people have given the answer: 'because underneath the seemingly endless variety of languages, there is a hidden unity. Once, there was an original language, the language of paradise. A common origin in the past is then the uniting principle.[27] Others look for the underlying unity by trying to develop a universal language. A common future for all languages is foreseen. But these attempts, both to find the original language and to develop a super-language are bound to fail.[28]

In the same way, earlier attempts to construe a 'generalised religion' have failed. Each remains unique and incomparable. The attempts to create a common religious language are often perceived by the adherents of religious communities as imperialistic projects, robbing their community of all colour and [illegible].

But if languages are incommensurable, how is it ever possible for speakers of different languages to really understand each other? And how can you understand the human ability to translate? There is no a priori theory explaining how we can communicate or taking away our anxiety about the gaps in understanding. We can only point out that people have been translating back and forth all the time. The work of translators between languages, cultures or religions is never perfect. [illegible] linguistic [illegible]. The faithful translator [illegible] justice to the language he translates from as well as to [illegible] the language he trans[illegible] [illegible] judgement that enables the whole process of translation. This is a risky process. Ricoeur points out that there is always the chance of betrayal, in spite of the attempt on the part of the translator to be loyal

Op. cit., 5.

Op. cit., 16.

Op. cit., 17.

[28] Op. cit., 23.

to both sides.[30] Nevertheless, translators go back and forth between languages, cultures and religions, aiming at the faithful and loyal bridging of the gaps between communities. In our dialogue groups they learn to translate the messages of their respective Scriptures back and forth.

There is no guarantee that interreligious reading in a dialogue context may lead to success. We can only hear from some participants afterwards that they have experienced moments of real transformation.

Anne Hege Grung gives the following definition of interreligious dialogue: 'a mutual encounter between equal parties, without hidden agendas, not aiming at transforming the other, but at taking part in a mutual transformation that may happen through the encounter.'[31]

In taking the experiences within dialogue groups seriously, we can see that they all attach great importance to respect, faithfulness and the tolerance of difference. These may be brought together under the heading of what [illegible] 'domestic hospitality'. Such a form of openness and flexibility in loyalties may sometimes end up in transforming the [illegible] in their conversations [illegible] their own Scripture and the Scriptures of other[illegible]

Appendix

Preliminary Questionnaire for Focus Group Meeting:

1. Who took the initiative to form your group and why?
2. Who is responsible for the organization?
3. What is your target group?
4. What is the aim of your meetings?
5. What parts/narratives/themes of Scripture did you share?
6. What is the structure of the conversation?
7. Where do you meet?
8. What is the feedback of the participants?
9. During the meeting, what are topics of discussion/debate, and how do participants handle the discussion?
10. Are there any difficulties or dead ends, and how do you respond to them?
11. Are there any comments from the larger community about this group?

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[30] Op. cit., 8.

[31] Grung, *Gender Justice*, 59.

12. Are you aware of other groups in your area that are engaged in shared readings of Scripture?

Topic list for focus group interviews: Aims of the group

What are the aims of the group and what are the conscious or unconscious rules of behaviour within the group?

Insider or outsider?

How does the group pay attention to possible power differences? Is Scripture explained in terms of the group that 'owns' it? Where are moments of shared 'we' in the group, where are moments of estrangement, also vis-à-vis the texts?

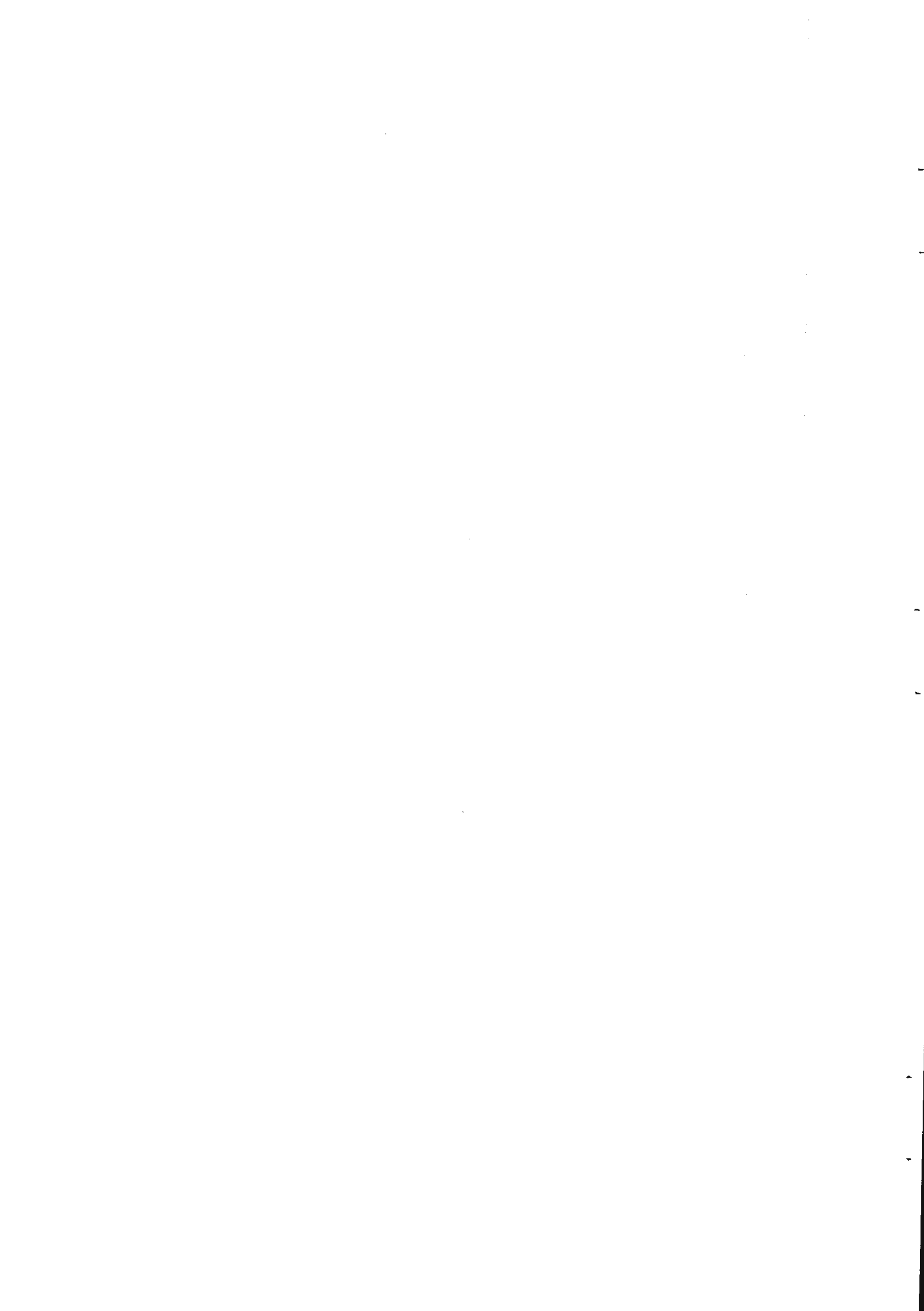
Sameness or difference?

In what ways is attention paid to the similarities in the texts? How does the group deal with differences?

Translation processes

Who chooses the texts? Are there instances when the group members develop new terms in trying to explain the text to 'outsiders'? Give examples of new meanings coming out of the discussion?

Theology of Dialogue



[illegible]

Volker Küster

The distinction between a theology of dialogue and a theology of religions is programmatic.[1] While the latter in my understanding is reflecting from an internal Christian point of view upon the role of other religions within its own thought system, a theology of dialogue crosses this very boundary and takes into consideration the position of the other. This differentiation is based on the observation that each and every religion faces an exclusivism-inclusivism dilemma. In Christian terms the question is, whether adherents of other religions are excluded from salvation when they do not convert to Christianity or whether they are always already included in God's grace no matter what. The third option suggested by the postmodern pluralist theology of religions, namely that all religions are equal ways to salvation in their own right, on closer analysis turns out to be a sublime inclusivism as well. The suggested way from the ecclesiocentrism or Christocentrism of the exclusivist position to the theocentrism of the inclusivist model and finally to a position beyond the theism/non-theism of the pluralist option takes seriously neither the Christian tradition nor the identity of the other religions.

Contrary to the assertion of some representatives of the pluralist theology of religions Christology does not have to be circumvented. The kenosis, the self humiliation or emptying of Jesus Christ and his way of the cross are theological patterns that emphasize an attitude of vulnerability and respect towards the other. The Trinity, which is also

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[1] Cf. Volker Küster, Who, with whom, about what? Exploring the Landscape of Inter-religious Dialogue, in: *Exchange* 33, 2004, 73-92; id., *Einführung in die Interkulturelle Theologie*, Göttingen 2011.

regarded as an obstacle in some interreligious encounters, can be in-
terpreted as a Christian way of thinking plurality. The perichoresis, the
mutual penetration of the three persons of the trinity or the unity of
immanent and economic trinity as well as pneumatology as such, are
often referred to in this regard.

By crossing the borders of the Christian frame of reference and
community a theology of dialogue creates an interstitial or third space.
Whoever crosses these borders makes him or herself vulnerable to the
other. This vulnerability applies also to one's own community, which
may be suspicious about whoever has been "out there" and encoun-
tered the other. Still a theology of dialogue does not mean giving up
one's own position. To the contrary, if one cannot take a stance and
give witness to his or her faith convictions, how can a dialogue evolve
at all? This is true also for other believers in relationship to his or her
community as well as their Christian counterpart. The third space is
therefore not a space free of power, but mirrors the power relation-
ships of the communities involved through the participants in the dia-
logue. Nevertheless, those who are willing to cross boarders, both
forth and back, are important in keeping these borders open and com-
municating interreligious knowledge in both directions. Basically
there are three types of interreligious dialogue. The dialogue of life is
pre-conceptual and focuses on ethical issues enhancing 'neighborolo-
gy' among the common people. The dialogue of the heart is post-
conceptual and brings together the mystics of the different religious
traditions in their spiritual quest. Finally, because it challenges loyal-
ties to the doctrinal systems of the respective religions and their
learned representatives, the conceptual dialogue of the mind is the
most conflict-ridden. "Agreeing to disagree" is often the outcome of
these nevertheless necessary encounters.

M. Amin Abdullah and Syafa'atun Almirzanah describe how in-
terreligious dialogue began to flourish in Indonesia from a Muslim
perspective by pointing out the function of the peculiar Pancasila con-
stitution and the roles that universities, intellectuals and NGO's have
played in this process. Emanuel Gerrit Singgih focuses on the para-
digm shift in the Christian discourse in Indonasia from religious free-
dom to religious pluralism and its consequences for the relationship
between mission and dialogue. My own contribution reflects on the
exhibition that was held in conjunction with the conference in Yogya
that brought together Christian and Muslim artists initiating a "Dia-
logue through the Arts".

Celebrating Differences through Dialogue in Indonesia. The Significance of Understanding Religions Today

M. Amin Abdullah and *Syafa'atun Almirzanah*

Interfaith dialogue is one of the most impressive intellectual discourses of the 20th century. It became the topic of the day, from the formal *fora* of academia to popular discussion in the cafes. Like any other phenomenon, it does not stand by itself. It emerged as a result of many factors. One of them, if not the most important, is what Gilles Kepel called the "crisis of modernity".[1]

With the exception of those who a priori reject such discussion, a lot of people assume that the intensity and quality of the dialogue will increase in the future.[2] Even today, there is no more discussion about the importance of the dialogue, but rather about what is the most appropriate approach/method for the dialogue, and how the dialogue can yield praxis consciousness at the grass root level and not only at the academic or intellectual levels.

The contemporary globalizing context of religious pluralism is unlike any of its precursors in that never before have so many different religious communities and individuals existed in such close proximity to – and even interdependence on – one another. The very existence of the fairly recent interreligious movement is an indication that today the world's religions are interacting on an unprecedented scale.

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[1] Gilles Kepel, *The Revenge of God. The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the Modern World*, Pennsylvania 1993, 191.

[2] Just one current example: Waleed El-Ansary and David K. Linnan (eds), *Muslim and Christian Understanding: Theory and Application of "A Common Word"*, New York 2010. For the Indonesian context cf. J.B. Banawiratma et al., *Dialog Antarumat Beragama: Gagasan dan Praktik di Indonesia* [*Dialogue among Adherents of Religions: Ideas and Practice in Indonesia*], Jakarta 2010.

[illegible] speaking, we find [illegible] traditions share some of the same fundamental values that each of us cherish in our own religions, albeit expressed in different ways. We also realize that we are being challenged to articulate our own religious identities in an increasingly religiously plural setting where others are, in many ways, listening and asking questions of us as we do so. What this means is that whether we like it or not *to be religious today is to be interreligious.*

Friedrich Max Muller's famous dictum "He who knows one religion knows none", is perhaps largely referring in his own scholarly context to those who aspired to become experts in the study of a particular religious tradition. Yet today, this dictum seems to have significance well beyond the membership of the American Academy of Religion and similar scholarly societies. In today's increasingly religiously plural social contexts, these words suggest that a failure to engage pluralism, including in this case to engage multiculturalism, is an act of self-marginalization within our own social contexts.

They also suggest that, without some understanding of the faith and culture of our neighbor, the religious person (or community) living in a religiously and culturally plural society cannot even understand oneself (or itself). Thus, the understanding of religions is vital because of the massive power that religions have wielded, something that no one can deny. We can ask ourselves whether one can understand any culture and history – political or social – without understanding the relevant religions.

1. Indonesia as a Pluralistic and Pancasila State: No *dhimmi* in Indonesia

Plurality is a fact of our contemporary world, both on a global scale and on the level of specific societies. Throughout most of recorded history, humanity has experienced a rich plurality of religions. This is due to the manifoldness of the divine revelation and of its human pursuit in different cultures. "Religions are many and varied and they reflect the desire of men and women throughout the ages to enter into relationship with the Absolute Being".[3]

Theological explanations of this plurality vary from tradition to tradition as well as within a single tradition. In the Abrahamic faiths such explanations tend to fall into two distinct, but not always mutual-

[3] Pope John Paul II in Asisi, 27 Oct 1986.

ly exclusive, categories. There are those explanations that attribute religious plurality either to ignorance of the truth, or perversity in the face of truth. Yet there are other explanations that suggest that religious plurality is somehow a part of the divine design to bring humanity together as one family before God. Suffice to say that it is this second category of explanations that one most often finds at the theological heart of efforts at interfaith dialogue.

For many Western observers, of course, Indonesia is not what first comes to mind when one thinks of the Muslim world. The average Westerner is perhaps more familiar with its ancient Hindu-Buddhist temples and graceful Balinese arts than with the fact that Indonesia the fourth most populous nation in the world – is also the world's largest majority-Muslim country. Some 88 percent of this nation's 220 to 230 million people officially profess Islam. On these grounds alone, what Indonesian Muslims think and do should be a matter of general interest.

Plurality is also the very texture of Indonesia. In terms of religion in Indonesia, many researchers maintain that there is a demographic paradox: despite the huge Muslim majority population, Indonesia is constitutionally *not* an Islamic state. On the other hand, it is not a secular state either. Constitutionally it is a unitary state that embodies and simplifies a philosophy called *Pancasila* ("Five Principles"). These principles are:

(1) Belief in the one Supreme God; (2) a just and civilized humanity; (3) the unity of Indonesia; (4) democracy led by the wisdom of unanimity arising from deliberations among representatives of the people; and (5) social justice for the whole people of Indonesia. Therefore, Muslims' acceptance of Pancasila is no doubt one of the most important roots of pluralism in Indonesia.

Despite its religious diversity, Indonesia has until recently been generally known as a country where a number of great world religions meet and develop in peaceful co-existence. The region is also known as one of the least Arabicized areas throughout the Muslim world.

Pancasila can be viewed as a secular as well as an equality definition of monotheism since religion is defined as ethics and separated from the state. This is the foundation which made it possible to overcome the tension between Islam and a secular national state in Indone-

... and to demonstrate a successful [illegible] harmonious unity of cultural-ethnically and religiously [illegible].[4]

Basam Tibi in an article in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, October 27, 1995, opines that the Arab core countries of Islamic civilization have neither a cultural-ethnical and religious foundation for inner peace, nor can offer an economically successful development model, despite their oil-based prosperity. Therefore the question comes up whether it is Southeast Asia, that is Indonesia, that will become the center of Islamic civilization as it moves into the 21st century because of its model capabilities.

It is important to note the definition of a tolerant and pluralistic monotheism by then President Sukarno, who described the first principle of Pancasila as follows:

> It's the principle of belief in God. It means that all Indonesians believe in God in the sense that the Christians believe in God in harmony with the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Muslims in line with the teachings of Muhammad, the Buddhists practice their religion as prescribed in their holy scriptures. But we all together believe in God. The Indonesian state is a state where every believer can worship God according to his own choice of religion. The Indonesian people believe in God in a refined manner that is without the egoism of any one religion.

This Pancasila definition of monotheism is a clear-cut deviation from the traditional Islamic *Dhimmi*[5] principle. Pancasila puts Muslims, Christians, Hindus and Buddhists on an equal level. That is not only a revolution in Islamic thinking but also a translation of the mystical ideas of the great Sufi Muslim Ibn Arabi into a political program. The Sufi Islamic tolerance and its rejection of any dogmatism has become the basis of political reality in Indonesia.

In Indonesia, non-Muslims are not "*dhimmis*" but citizens of equal standing. It offers a model for an equal definition of Islam and Christianity, which is also extended to Buddhism, Hinduism and Confucianism, religions which are not mentioned in Islamic revelations.

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[4] In the state administration, Indonesia has a special ministry in charge to administer religious affairs, the Ministry of Religious Affairs. It has five Directorates General, namely the Directorate General of Islam, the Directorate General of Catholicism, the Directorate General of Protestantism, the Directorate General of Buddhism and the Directorate General of Hinduism.

[5] A *dhimmi* may be defined as a person with accountability and inviolability (holiness), he is granted human rights and constitutional rights. In classical Islamic jurisprudence the term *dhimmah* means accountability and inviolability, which is usually termed personhood in modern legal discourse. *Dhimmah* is also commonly understood as "protection", "treaty" and "peace" because it is a treaty that puts non-Muslims under the protection of Muslims (it is the concept of the rights of minorities).

Thus, religious harmony exceeds by far the parable of Lessing as demonstrated by Indonesia: it has to embrace the other world religions, and Indonesia represents here a model for peace. Even today one finds in Indonesia a blend of *adat* (local customs and traditions often from pre-Islamic times) and religious Islamic rules. The result is an Indonesian version of Islam that is, not seldom but often, quite independent.

The former Indonesian Minister for Religious Affairs, and the founding father of Comparative Religion in Indonesia, the late Prof. Dr. H. A. Mukti Ali, on the occasion of the First Conference on Islamic Civilization, caused consternation among his audience when describing *adat* as the nucleus of Indonesian Islam. Responding to the provocation that this would not be Islamic and that he would have to decide whether he is Muslim or Indonesian, he stated: "I am an Indonesian and a Muslim."

Indeed, most Indonesians are Muslims, and the rest are Christian (Catholic and Protestant), Hindus, Buddhist, Confucians; there is even a very small Jewish community. The reality of religious pluralism is not just a matter of the historical past, but also a reality of the living present, reflected in curiosity about other religions, studying them at various levels and reading each other's scripture. As we do so, we are often inspired by each other's insights and practices.

Pluralism is more than toleration. Pluralism necessitates a willingness to build constructive understanding about "others". Thus, pluralism is a dialogue. The Qur'an commands dialogue *(shura)* for problem solving. God has given us the way to pluralism, and every problem should be solved by dialogue.

2. Reconstructing "diversity"

In this situation, it is important to reconstruct "diversity" in the current social change. Diversity is a fact and cannot be avoided but more important is how diversity can built the spirit of pro-existence. Diversity can result in a commitment to build Indonesian justice and harmony. Diana Eck (2002), the director of the Pluralism Project at Harvard University, highlights the meaning of pluralism. That is, pluralism is an *active engagement* in diversities and differences. Diversity necessitates a *participative attitude*, thus pluralism actually is about fact and reality, and not about theological differences. It means that on the level of theology, we have to admit that every religion has its own rituals

that differ from one religion to others. On the social level, pluralism is more than 'admitting' differences, we need active engagement between communities to build togetherness/cooperation. Only by cooperation the nation will grow better.

Thus, this new interpretation of pluralism in the Indonesian context is crucial to avoiding fatal misunderstandings, what Edward W. Said called *misinterpretation* and *misrepresentation*. The rise of arbitrary interpretation of pluralism will have a serious impact, especially for diversity itself.

A great nation is a nation that can construct pluralism to build togetherness and unity in diversity. As [illegible] said pluralism is a process of continuous creativity, because pluralism is an effort to solve the problem of diversity, and not an effort to divide, let alone to create social unrest.

3. The Role of Universities in Dialogue/Active Engagement

Academically, it can be said that the department of the comparative study of religion in the faculty of theology in the Islamic University in Indonesia, is the pioneer of dialogue. The department was established in 1961 by Prof. Dr. H. A. Mukti Ali, its first director. He was a student of Wilfred Cantwell Smith at McGill University, Montreal, Canada. When he was appointed as a Minister of Religious Affairs (September 1971), his primary interest was interreligious harmony. In fact, others had undertaken the quest for religious harmony before him. Leaders of religions held a meeting to discuss religious harmony in Indonesia. At this meeting, Muslim leaders objected to Christian evangelization among Muslims.[6] The Protestant and Catholic leaders maintained, however, that evangelization of all peoples is one of their responsibilities according to their religion. Ultimately, no agreement could be reached, and the dialogue failed.

Mukti Ali continued the effort, but in a different way. According to the former model, religious leaders were invited to be the main participants. One of Mukti Ali's principal contributions to the development of this dialogue was to shift the focus from religious leaders to academics with expertise in religion or related fields from premier institutions such as the Institute of Islamic Studies, major Christian

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[6] Th Sumartono in his thesis written in 1971 used the term "proselytism". Cf. his unpublished thesis *Soal-Soal Theologis Dalam Pertemuan Antar Agama* [Theological Matters in the Encounter of Religions]. Sekolah Theologia Djl. Proklamasi 27. Djakarta 1971, 42.

schools of theology, and major graduate programs from a variety of different universities. If in the former efforts, the initiator was the government (top-down), in Mukti-Ali's era this changed to initiators who were themselves experts (bottom-up). If in the former the subject discussed was theological problems, in his era the theme discussed was "development" and the role or place of religion in the development process. He established a theory of "living in religious harmony" *(kerukunan hidup beragama)*, and "dialogue". His very well known concept is "agree in disagreement".

It should be noted, however, that until 1971 in Indonesia, no one was talking about religious harmony and the means necessary to support it. Since independence, the relationship between the state and religion had been a hotly contested issue. Religious people feared that Indonesia would become a secular state. Conversely, people also feared that Indonesia would become a theocratic state. Mukti Ali also took these problems into consideration. He did not agree with those who insisted that religion ought to be a strictly personal affair. In *Pancasila* as the way of life of the nation, the belief in one God is a life ethos for the Indonesian people. Thus, he came up with the phrase, "Indonesia is not a secular state, but it is not a theocratic state either. Indonesia is a Pancasila state". At times he also said that Indonesia is a socio-religious state.

In order to stimulate the efforts for interreligious harmony, the Department of Comparative Religion at the Islamic University of Indonesia, Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, also founded an Indonesian branch of the International Association for the History of Religion in 1990. In 1993 this department took the initiative to convene a national conference, commemorating the 1893 World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago. Prominent members of Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity were invited. Dr. Sularso Sopater, General Chairman of the Indonesian Council of Churches, delivered a speech on the future of religious pluralism, while two Hindus from Bali, I Gusti Ngurah Bagus and I Ketut Wiana also spoke about the themes of pluralism and the participation of religions in national development. Finally the Congress adopted the text of a declaration expressing the same themes. The conference also inaugurated the National Foundation for the Study of Interreligious Harmony, which later started an international journal [illegible] *Religiosa*, Indonesian Journal of Religious Harmony. The association hosted an IAHR Regional Conference on Religions [illegible] Problems, Practice and Education [illegible]

Yogyakarta and Semarang, Indonesia, 27 September - 3 October 2004.[7]

Actually, since the 1960s, discussions have been initiated among young Muslim intellectuals about the visions of the Islamic student organization for the future Islamic society. One of the results of the ensuing heated debates was a greater awareness on the part of some Muslim leaders of the pluralistic character of Indonesian society. Pointing to the fourth pillar of the Pancasila, many agreed that mutual deliberation and consensus should include, on equal term, representatives from other religious groups in helping define the future ideological and moral orientation of Indonesians. In the task of nation building every group should participate and no one, these Muslims included, could force others to accept an outcome against their will.

In 1980 a forum was established through the Department of Religious Affairs where religious questions and matters of interfaith relations could be discussed. Members of the forum were to be the leaders of different religious communities. The forum was charged with considering the relationship of the first pillar of the Pancasila, the belief in Supreme God, to the other pillars of [illegible] humanity, nationalism, consensus and social justice. In the context of this forum, leaders of the religious communities have the chance to meet and try to resolve issues that otherwise would be discussed only within their individual communities.

The subsequent development of the role of the universities in making dialogue was the establishment of Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies (ICRS-Yogya) in 2006. This is a consortium of three universities: Gadjah Mada University (UGM), State Islamic University (UIN) Sunan Kalijaga, and Duta Wacana Christian University (UKDW). Together they offer an international PhD program in interreligious studies. This is the only doctoral program in interreligious studies that is based in a major, multi-religious national university and cosponsored by Islamic and Christian universities.[8]

The primary strength of ICRS-Yogya is the study of Indonesian religions, especially Islam. Indonesia includes the largest and most dynamic Muslim population in the world. ICRS-Yogya also has strong resources for the study of Indonesian Christianity and can facilitate

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[7] Cf. also Michael Pye and Edith Franke (eds). *Religious Harmony: Problems, Practice and Education*. Berlin 2006.

[8] Cf. the leaflet. An Inter-Religious International Ph.D. Program in Yogyakarta. ICRS (Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies) -Yogya. Edition: March 2011.

research on Balinese Hinduism, Indonesian Buddhism, Indonesian Chinese religions, and indigenous local religions. ICRS-Yogya encourages comparative study with religious movements in other parts of the world. Although this international PhD program is primarily academic, the daily social encounters among the lectures and the students are very stimulating and significant for building bridges and mutual trust between different religious adherents and perhaps among their activists.

Considering the pluralistic character of Indonesian society, it is clear that such contributions from each citizen would work toward complementarity and cooperation rather than supporting the domination of any one. It gives the opportunity to every religious group to develop a vision of society that is really inclusive, taking into account the rights and tasks of other communities as well as their own. The impetus for cooperation necessitates the identification of a theological rationale and justification that acknowledges the existence of adherents of other religions and faiths.

4. The Role of Intellectuals and NGOs

There are several thinkers who are significant contributors to this new form of conversation. One is Nurcholish Madjid, known for his earlier attack against the "Islamic state" concept heralded by the older generation. In his article, "The Actualization of the Teaching of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'a" he developed the theme that the understanding of an exclusive Islamic society is unacceptable in Indonesia. He cites historical precedent for an antisectarian perspective, arguing that Muslims should accept other interpretations of truth provided they are consonant with belief in One God. Thus, he says, the exclusive claim to truth and knowledge goes against the Word of God and its spirit. What is demanded from believers is mutual respect and understanding. According to him, this inclusive theology is not the process of Islamic adaptation to modernity, but it is inherent in Islam. After a brilliant career in the student movement and a PhD under Prof. Fazlur Rahman in Chicago (1984), he set the tone for his later work in Indonesia with the title of a book in 1987, *Islam as a Modern and Indonesian Faith*.

The two key words in his thinking are secularization and contextualization. He used the very controversial word secularization in the early 1970s (following Harvey Cox's *The Secular City* and the positive interpretation of this term by Friedrich Gogarten) to indicate the

necessity to make the message of the Qur'an concrete and relevant under new conditions in every society. Secularization, according to Madjid, means bringing the ethical doctrines of Islam up-to-date. Modern Muslims should study the Qur'an and formulate the basic values found therein. These should be the basis for the application of these values to a modern Islamic society. In the late 1980s the less controversial word, contextualization, was used to indicate the permanent task of finding new formulations for the ethical call of Islam.

From a wide reading of Western and Christian books, Madjid made many overtures towards Christian theologians, such as the following comment on Sura 3:64:

> Say People of the Book! Come now to a word common between us and you, that we serve none but God and that we associate not aught with Him. The Qur'an asks us, that is the followers of the scriptural religions, not the adherents of natural religions like animism or paganism, to abandon all practices of creating our own gods, in the sense that we have to free ourselves from objects that are binding and suffocating us spiritually. This is in line and identical with the meaning of the fir[illegible] line of [illegible]: I witness, that there is no god; this means: 'I declare myself [illegible] the limitations of false beliefs that bind and suffocate my spirit'. [illegible] complete this process of liberation, this statement has to be [illegible] except Allah (*al-Ilah*, i.e. the true God) who is understood [illegible] of the One and On- [illegible] the true theology of liberation. If we [illegible] are allowed to [illegible] has become popular amongst Catholic religious activ[illegible] is no true liberation f[illegible] a human individual [illegible] and truly practices these words in act of his life

Another leading figure of cooperation between Muslims and non-Muslims in Indonesia is Abdurrahman Wahid, a former president and elected general chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama (the biggest Islamic Social Organization), in 1984. Generally considered a traditionalist, he is nonetheless not a proponent of a kind of frozen *taqlid.* He entertained that Muslims and non-Muslims must struggle for the goal of Pancasila together. And like Nurcholish, he justifies this by pointing to the *fitra* of humankind.

In the 1990s he was elected as one of the presidents of the interfaith World Conference on Religion and Peace. During the aftermath of the Situbondo riots and the attacks on churches in 1996, he ordered

[9] Nurcholis Madjid, Beberapa Renungan tentang Kehidupan Keagamaan untuk Generasi Mendatang [Some Reflections concerning the Religious Life for the Coming Generations], in: *Ulumul Qur'an* 4, 1993, 4-25.

his youth organization, *Anshor*, to work together with Christian youth organizations to secure the safety of religious buildings.

On the non-Muslim side. Religious leaders also feel the urgent need to develop standards of ethical and moral behavior relevant to their developing society. They have to come to some insight into theological meaning of such interdependence with adherent of other faiths in the context of the nation. The Communion of Churches in Indonesia, for example, offers an annual seminar in which representatives of the different religious communities are invited to share their insight on the challenges before them. The organization tries to contribute to the kinds of common efforts that are being envisaged and proposed by Muslim thinkers such as Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid.

There is a development in mutual understanding between religions. In Indonesia, besides the concern for interfaith dialogue in departments of comparative religion in several universities which has been increasing for decades, there is also notable involvement in interfaith dialogue by NGOs. The Indonesian government is not the only body active in the field of interfaith relations. There are several private organizations, commonly referred to as NGOs or non-governmental organizations, that deal with the same issue. The most striking difference between government initiatives and NGO policies is that the latter combine social activism with interfaith commitment. The Lembaga Kajian Islam dan Sosial (LKIS, Foundation for the Study of Islam and Society) started in the early 1990s in Yogyakarta is a debating club of young Nahdlatul Ulama' students and scholars. They developed ideas about civil society as a society in which the government should not be the sole player in the political game so that many different parties could fulfill their [illegible] role. They initiated contacts with people who were not Muslim and hosted several seminars on interfaith relations. In 199[illegible] they started a publishing house that issued, among others, studies about Hasan Hanafi and translations of works by A[illegible] Asghar Engineer and Abdullah an-Na'im, an author who is particularly outspoken in his remarks about Muslim attitudes to women and to other religions.

On the initiative of Protestants, Institut DIAN/Interfidei (Dialog Antar Iman, Interfaith Dialogue) was founded on 20 December, 1991 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia by notarial document no.38, and then publicly announced on 10 August, 1992.

The Institute does not represent institutional religion, but is a community of various religious adherents. The working scope of the

institution is not limited to the state-recognized religions (Islam, Christian, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism), but includes all religious expression in Indonesian society, such as Confucianism, tribal religions and traditional beliefs. The institution serves as a forum, wherein religious thinking and faith concepts that evolve from the dynamics of discourses on pluralism, as well as real life encounters, are shared and discussed.

DIAN is also active in the interdenominational struggle for the defense of human rights. The largest national human rights organizations, the Lembaga Bantuan Hukum (Foundation for Legal Aid) and Forum Keadilan (Platform for Justice), are interdenominational, and prominent Christian and Muslim leaders are active in both of them. Cooperation for the sake of democracy and justice is here a higher priority than theological dialogue.[10]

Conclusion

Indonesia, like other countries in the world, is not alone in facing the dynamics of the new political waves across the world and resulting disturbances. As the former Soviet Union faced new demands for democracy in the 1990s, followed by Eastern Europe and the Balkan regions, Indonesia too experienced the same political changes, in which the New Order regime lead by Soeharto had to step down in 1998 and the new regime of Reformation Order came to power. The political atmosphere in Indonesia totally changed from 1998 on. Today, the political climate is more open, not only from the perspective of the media, but also from that of the political, social and cultural movements. Many new political parties and new non-governmental organizations have mushroomed. Greater intercultural collaborations and greater interfaith [illegible] as well as frequent social and communal conflicts have [illegible] this new development in [illegible] country. One example of this [illegible] openness is the [illegible] acknowledgement of [illegible] as a formal [illegible] religion in Indonesia [illegible] Islam, Christianity [illegible] Protestant [illegible] This discussion of

[10] [illegible] comprehensive information on [illegible] religious dialogue in Indonesia, [illegible] J.B. Banawiratma, Zainal Abidin Bagir, et al., *[illegible] Beragama. Gagasan dan Praktik di Indonesia* [Dialogue among Adherents of Religion, Ideas and Practice in Indonesia], *Jakarta 2010*. Also cf. Suhadi Cholil, Zainal Abidin Bagir, et.al., *Laporan Tahunan Kehidupan Beragama di Indonesia* (A yearly reports on the dynamics and development of religious life in Indonesia) issued by the Center for Religious & Cross-Cultural Studies (CRCS), Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta 2009.

the new social, cultural and political upheaval would not be complete without mentioning the diverse responses from Muslim communities. Part of these Muslim communities' response can be categorized as what the society and religions experts call a global salafism.[11]

Again the state philosophy of Pancasila – as a political response to the problem of pluralism and multiculturalism in the early stage of a new independent state, the idea of Constitutionalism behind it (formally known as UUD 1945) and the Unity of the Indonesian archipelago (NKRI) which were established through agreement by the founding fathers/mothers as the solid foundation of modern Indonesia at the time of independence in 1945 is really under severe examination in the time of globalisation. As has been illustrated above, not only the state has the duty and the responsibility to defend the Constitution, Pancasila and the Unity of Indonesia, but all the citizens as a whole, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, class or race background. Each one has their own duty and responsibility to defend the noble agreement of having an Indonesia in their own way and through their own initiatives. [illegible] members of NGOs, universities, academicians, intellectuals, politicians, community as well as religious leaders and their manifold organizations, local leadership, cultural leaders, youth organizations, all those stake holders must, with their own styles and commitments, defend the idea of Constitution and Pancasila as an umbrella for living together in harmony. Cultural, social and religious dialogue should always take place and be seriously maintained throughout the country, not only at the initiative of the state, but also at that of civil society itself. As long as these stake holders maintain their view to defend the idea of Constitutionalism, Indonesia – the fourth most populous nation in the world – and the world's largest majority Muslim country – will significantly prove that Islam and Muslim citizens are really compatible with the idea of democracy, with its modern idea of pluralistic and multicultural society.

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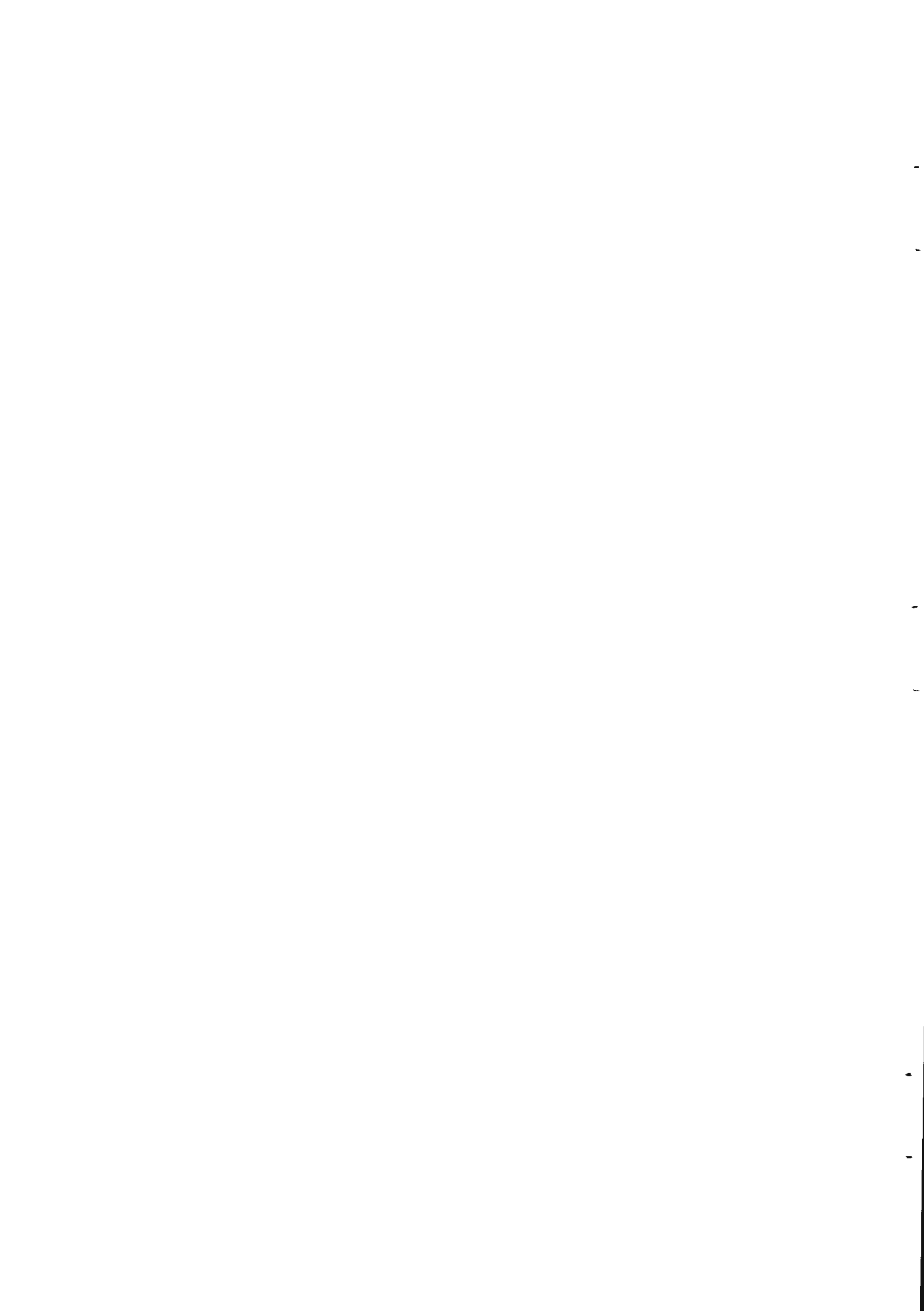
[11] Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, London 2009. For the case of Indonesia cf. 169-220.



Mission and Dialogue as Means of Communication. A Paradigm Shift in the Indonesian Context[1]

Emanuel Gerrit Singgih

It seems that discourse concerning communication by Christians in Indonesia can be divided into two periods: before the nineties people talk about communication in its relationship with religious freedom and after the nineties people talk about communication in its relationship with religious plurality. If we look at these two topics as representing different paradigms, then we can say that the first is talking about communication within the framework of religious freedom, and that the second is talking about communication within the framework of religious plurality.[2] We can trace the roots of the first paradigm far into the colonial period when the Dutch government, as Europe attempted to consolidate its life following the chaos of the Napoleonic wars, applied the policy of religious freedom or liberty in its realms in the 19th century. The policy was also applied to the colony of Dutch East India. It was in this period that the Catholic mission returned to

[1] This is a revised English version of my article in Indonesian, "Misi, Komunikasi dan Perpindahan Paradigma di Indonesia", in: Rudy Tindage-Rainy and MP Hutabarat (eds), *Teologi, Komunikasi dan Rekonsiliasi*, Jakarta 2009, 49-62.

[2] Cf. Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, vol. 2, no. 2, Chicago and London 1962. I am using the revised edition of 1970, which contains Kuhn's reply to his critics. The Indonesian translation is done by Tjun Surjaman, *Peran Paradigma dalam Revolusi Sains*, Dr. Lili Rasyidi (ed.), Bandung: Remaja Offset which refers to the revised edition 1970. Thinking about paradigm is introduced into theology by Hans Küng and David Tracy (eds), *Paradigm Change in Theology: A Symposium for the Future*, Edinburgh 1989. In the field of Missiology the paradigm model is used by David Bosch, *Transforming Mission. Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, New York 1991. The Indonesian translation of Bosch's work was done by Stephen Suleeman, *Transformasi Misi Kristen*, Jakarta 1997.

the archipelago, after a long absence. In addition to the Catholics, other mission bodies were also working in this colony with the aim to Christianize the indigenous population, who are followers of the tribal religions, mystical groups, Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists. In the beginning of the 20th century, they even began to convert the Chinese community.

Although in principle the colonial government followed the policy of religious freedom, they applied qualifications to the policy in areas that were mainly Muslim. Past experience had proven that these areas were able to defend themselves and even to fight against colonial interests. The 19th century colonial government was keen not to provoke the Muslims, and so they did not give permission for the mission bodies mentioned above to penetrate these areas, for instance the Minangkabau area of West Sumatra. But on the whole we can say that the colonial government's policy of religious freedom was a blessing for the Catholic and other missions that were working in the colony. When Indonesia became independent after the Second World War, in addition to the regions where Christians had long formed the majority (the Mollucans, Flores), there were also areas where a Christian majority was relatively recent phenomenon, such as Tapanuli, Minahasa, Torajaland; even Kalimantan and Java had a substantial number of Christians. All of these are the fruits of the successful work by the Catholic mission and the Protestant mission bodies in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Using Karel Steenbrink's term, we can say that Christians in Indonesia remain a minority, but a strong minority.[3] This successful enterprise seems to become the norm for many Christians in the post colonial period to continue mission to the non-Christians. The reason is theological, namely the Great Commission which is derived from the New Testament text of Matthew 28:18-20, but there is also a *political* reason, namely the principle of religious liberty. I think in general many Christians in Indonesia followed this idea of mission until the end of the 20th century.

However, as can be seen above, at the end of the nineties, many tried to convince Christians to pay attention to, acknowledge and appreciate the fact of plurality in Indonesia, a plurality that has to be understood not only as a plurality of ethnicity, tribal associations, culture and art (which is more or less becoming common discourse), but also as *religious* plurality (which is not common). In Indonesia there

3 Cf. Karel Steenbrink, A Christian Minority in [illegible] *Missiology: An Ecume*[illegible] [illegible] 1995, 88-98.

are people who are very appreciative of ethnicity, tribal associations, culture and art, but not necessarily appreciative toward or even hostile to religious plurality. This hostile attitude toward religious plurality is caused to some extent by the acceptance of the phenomenon of secularization, which is understood as de-sacralization. But in the eighties this understanding [illegible] failed in its prediction that religions, especially the religions of the East (Hinduism, Buddhism, [illegible] and Confucianism) but also Christianity, would lose their hold on Asian peoples. On the contrary, in Asia these religions actually experienced revitalization and revivals, and so if we follow the understanding of secularization above we can say what has happened is not de-sacralization but re-sacralization![4] This re-sacralization brings to the fore the fact of religious plurality, including the Indonesian context. In the context of religious liberty, there is no need to appreciate religion, because such appreciation is directed toward *the person/s,* the adherents of a certain religion. But in the context of religious plurality, appreciation is directed toward *the religion* adhered to by the person/s, and this causes problems, because not every religion teaches parity or equality of religions.

Our problem in this article is mission and dialogue as means of communication. How do we relate mission and dialogue to the fact of religious plurality in the context of Indonesia? Or, how do we perform mission and dialogue within the context of the paradigm of religious plurality? Before attempting to answer this problem, it is good to be aware that we are not talking about *paradigm change* but *paradigm shift*. A new paradigm has appeared, but it does not make the former paradigm disappear. Even if we use the term "paradigm change", it does not necessarily mean replacement of the older paradigm with the new one.[5] Here also the views of Muslim theologians are considered, to acknowledge that communication is a two-way street.

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[4] Cf. Philip E. Hammond (ed), *The Sacred in a Secular Age*, Berkeley and London 1985.

[5] Cf. Küng and Tracy, *Paradigm Change*, 7 and 29. Actually Küng is also thinking in the same vein. Sometimes he uses the term "paradigm change", but on other occasions he uses also the term "paradigm shift".

1. Mission and Dialogue as means of communication within the paradigm of religious freedom

Mission and Dialogue contain communication.[illegible] A certain message is forwarded to the other, *communicated* to the other. It is necessary that all the conditions pertaining to communication are observed, so that the communication is effective. But the main condition, which can be said to be *the* penultimate condition, is acknowledgement of and appreciation toward the other as equal. It is only by meeting this condition, that communication becomes *humane*. Communication can be effective when it is done between master and slave. Through this communication a slave will know his/her place, which is below the master, and the master can be assured of his place, which is above the slave. But it is not an equal relationship. If the master is aware that the slave is a fellow human being, then communication could happen beyond the structure of inequality, but this is not ideal communication because the structure of inequality remains unchanged. In the 2008 movie *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, the hero (a boy), who is the son of the Nazi commandant of a slave labour camp has an accident and suffers a leg wound. The household slave, a medical doctor before being brought to the camp, came to his aid and bandaged the wound. When the mother comes home after doing some errands, she sees what happened. It takes a great effort from her side to say "thank you" to the slave, because by doing so she will acknowledge that the slave is a fellow human being, and that is precisely what is denied in the Nazi doctrines: a Jew is not a fellow human being!

It is interesting to check what happens in communication within the paradigm of religious liberty with regard to equality. According to Komaruddin Hidayat, an Indonesian Muslim scholar, the history of the entry of religions into the realm of Nusantara follows the pattern of *supersession*. Seen from the perspective of the birth of religions, Islam regards itself as superior to Christianity, and Christianity regards itself superior to Judaism. But seen from the perspective of the entry of religions into Indonesia, this supersession can also be seen differently: a religion which manages to take hold in the realm regards itself as being superior to the religion which arrived before it, or which existed before it. Hinduism and Buddhism regard themselves as being superior to the tribal or indigenous religions, Islam regards itself

[illegible] Cf. Pierre Babin with Mercedes Iannone, *The New Era in Religious Communication*, Minneapolis, 1991.

as being superior to Hinduism and Buddhism, and Christianity, which came last, regards itself as superior to all the others which have arrived before.[7] This pattern of supersession can be detected in popular stories of conversion, where the convert is always pictured as moving from a dark period to a brilliant one. The reaction of the earlier religion to this kind of placement can be imagined: in turn it pictures the incoming religion as an "imported religion". While on the whole the term "imported" has a positive meaning, (see for instance the recent case of the local automobile produced at Solo which had to undergo numerous tests that were never required of imported automobiles) in the context of religion, "imported" has a negative meaning. It is not original and therefore is not good! According to Komaruddin Hidayat, as long as religions in Indonesia follow this pattern of supersession, reconciliation among religions in Indonesia can never be achieved.

Komaruddin Hidayat's theory of supersession can be compared with the view of Aloysius Pieris, a Catholic contextual theologian from Sri Lanka, who observes that religious conversion *en masse* rarely happens in Asia (including in Indonesia). This is because the great metacosmic religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity that arrive in Asia, all absorb, to some extent, the cosmic or the indigenous/local religions. After the process of absorption is completed, the area can no longer receive a different metacosmic religion.[8] Thailand was a Buddhist country (except in the south, EGS) and still is, although for many years Christian missions have been very active in the country. The Philippines is a Christian country (again except in the south, EGS), although for many years there has been a Buddhist mission in that country. In Indonesia, Christianity was able to penetrate into areas that were under the influence of the cosmic religions. But Bali remains Hindu and Java remains Muslim. Individual conversion can happen, but group conversion never happens in these two islands (group conversions happened in the Batakland and among the tribal people of Central Sulawesi, which fall into the sphere of the cosmic religions).

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[7] Cf. Komarruddin Hidayat, Pluralitas Agama dan Masa Depan Indonesia [Religious Plurality and the Future of Indonesia], in: Soegeng Hardiyanto et al. (eds), *Agama dan Dialog* [Religion and Dialogue], Festschrift Olaf Herbert Schumann, Jakarta 1999, 206.

[8] Cf. Aloysius Pieris, Does Christ have a place in Asia? A Panoramic View, in: *Any Room for Christ in Asia?*, in: *Concilium* 1993/2, Leonardo Boff and Virgil Elizondo (eds), London and Maryknoll, NY 1993, 34f.

Pieris' theory can be questioned, but this is not the place to discuss it. I have analyzed his theory elsewhere.[9] Pieris is positive toward the religious demography of Asia. I think what he has in mind is the Christian mission, which always tries to penetrate into non-Christian areas, and in so doing, creates conflict. For Pieris it is good that the number of Christians in Asia is small (only 2-3% of the population of Asia). With a small population, mission is to be understood as doing everything except conversion or Christianization. But on the other hand, his theory is based on what I term the "status-quo of settled conquests", in which space or land becomes identified with religion (one example: in North Sulawesi, Minahasa is Christian, but its neighbour Bolaang Mongondow is Muslim). This could also explain why the great religions of Asia, which all share in the absorption of cosmic religions, cannot acknowledge this commonality in everyday life; each lives separately from the other. We can see this separation in the life of Christians and Muslims in the Mollucans. The two communities share commonality in the form of *pela gandong* culture, but even so, they still live separately and could come (and have come) to blows.

From Komaruddin Hidayat and Aloysius Pieris we can learn that the history of encounter between religions in Indonesia is coloured by the atmosphere of supersession and separation. But can we also have a picture of how the encounter is done in the more recent times? How do religions relate to one another in our contemporary life within the paradigm of religious freedom? In the next paragraph we will see how it is done by Christians in Indonesia.

2. Mission and Cultural Communication

There are several ways of doing mission within the paradigm of religious freedom in relation to cultural communication. First: in regarding one's own religion as representing light and other religions represent darkness. If we use one of R. Niebuhr's typologies, then here we see the workings of *Christ against Culture.*[10] Christianity is against the existing culture and religion, and communicates itself as a new

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[9] Cf. Emanuel Gerrit Singgih, Any Room for Christ in Asia? Statistics and the Location of the Next Christendom, in: *Exchange* 38/2/2009: 134-146. An Indonesian version is Adakah tempat baginya di Asia? Statistik dan penentuan lokasi Christendom, in: *Gema Teologi*, 2008, 35-43.

[10] Cf. R. Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, New York and London 1951. The other typologies are Fulfillment (Christ as fulfillment of Culture), Synthetic (Christ as integrator of Culture), Dualism (Christ in two cultures) and Transformation (Christ as transformer of culture).

religion and a new culture better equipped to face the modern era and its challenges. When Indonesia faced fundamental crisis in every aspect at the end of the presidency of General Soeharto in 1998, many churches in Indonesia were involved in a program called, "lunch from God". Every day volunteers prepared meals in front of churches or church-related buildings – for the poor, the becak drivers and low income people, all of whom suffered from a lack of food. All of them were non-Christians. There are of course volunteers who do this work from unselfish motives, but on the whole, the message which is communicated to the others is that Christians are richer and are better prepared for this kind of crisis. It is no surprise that in several places, these poor non-Christians were prevented from coming to these free lunches, because indirectly they made the non-Christians ashamed that they were not doing what the Christians were doing. This "lunch from God" was also seen as a tool for mission. Before these hungry people start eating their lunches, everyone was asked to participate in a Christian prayer, led by a Christian, because the meals came from Lord Jesus, the Christian God. So the message becomes broader: if you convert to Christianity, you will no longer experience hunger. The program did not last long – from daily it went to once a week, then every two weeks and, finally, ended after about six months. Why? Because it was clear that the people who came for these free lunches were not interested in converting to Christianity. This again, produced a message, that Christians are only interested in helping others if they show the potential to become Christian.

Second: to accept to some extent, features of the earlier religion. Traditional culture became the means or strategy for introducing the Christian religion. An example from Yogyakarta is the effort to utilize the culture of leather shadow play ("wayang kulit"), which is still popular among the people today. Much time and energy have been spent to create a special shadow play that could be used in catching the attention of non-Christians to the Christian message. One of these special shadow plays is called *wayang prajanjian.* This set of shadow puppets consists of almost all the known figures of the traditional shadow play, with the addition of some new, Christian, figures such as Jesus and Paul. The figures of Jesus and Paul are not original, however, rather they drew on some traditional figures which were deemed to be suitable, such as the figure of Nayarana (the god Kresna in his younger years) used to represent Jesus. The creators of *wayang prajanjian* were faced with a dilemma: if they created entirely new fig-

[illegible] ones unfamiliar to the audience [illegible] that the message would fail to be communicated; [illegible] alienated. But if the representations of Jesus and God were [illegible] the existing traditional figures, then it would not be a Christian shadow play, and then the message would also fail to be communicated. The solution was to adapt traditional figures, for instance the head of Nayarana now wears the crown of thorns, placed in such a way that it does not mar the symmetry of the puppet. Why Nayarana or Narayana? Because of theological likeness: both Nayarana and Jesus are incarnations: the one is the incarnation of Wisnu the Hindu God, while the other is the incarnation of the Father, the Christian's God.

Is the message successfully communicated by *wayang prajanjian*? I have not yet read any research on this topic, but it is clear that this new type of shadow play did not gain popularity, and because of this, is rarely performed nowadays. The reason lies in its function as a tool for mission, culture utilized as a bridgehead for Christianity to gain a foothold on an alien shore. Within the body of the Christian religion in Java, the same culture is rejected. In several Protestant Javanese churches *gamelan* music accompanies Christian hymns, as has been the case in many Catholic churches. But this too is close to failure because there is only minimum interest. Ironically, many church services in Java are more and more attracted to westernized or even Americanized charismatic models of worship. It is clear that to utilize culture as a tool for Christian communication or cultural approach as a mission strategy fails in this instance. *Wayang prajanjian* and *gamelan* music will succeed, if they are not used as strategy, but as means to live the Gospel within the community itself. But this is precisely the problem: the same culture that is used to communicate with the outside world is not used for communication within the community!

Third: by living in an integral way with people of other faiths in the Indonesian society. Here we see how the principle of religious freedom is applied in full. Other religions or/and cultures are still regarded as inferior, but this valuation is kept inside, and does not hinder normal personal interaction and communication with others. People used to rely on the principle of religious freedom because it was advantageous for Christians as a minority in Indonesia, but now the principle is seen as a self-standing entity and holds for all. Religious liberty will guarantee freedom to choose whatever religion one wishes, and this act of choice has to be respected even if one does not agree with others' choices. A Christian can disagree with the tenets of

Islam and vice versa. but the principle of religious liberty guarantees that the other will be seen as an equal human being in everyday dealings. Because religious claims of superiority cannot be proven in everyday life, this superiority could be proven in concrete acts, for instance, participation in development programs that are run by the government or by the state. In this kind of interaction an evangelical Christian can live together with non-Christians. And even dialogue can take place, as long as those who are involved in this dialogue pay respect to the differences between religions. This approach was summarized by Mukti Ali, a Minister of Religious Affairs during the Soeharto period, who once said: we can agree to disagree.

A strange picture of Indonesian Christianity slowly emerges: there are ecumenical Christians (who are eager for dialogue with Catholics) who are not in dialogue with the Muslims, and evangelical Christians (who are not eager for dialogue with Catholics) who are in dialogue with the Muslims. It seems that in Indonesia the first and the second kind of communication frequently happen, while the third is just recently happening. It could give a misleading impression that this third way is already applying the paradigm of religious plurality, while in reality it is still working within the framework of the paradigm of religious freedom. It could also lead to a misunderstanding that the above-mentioned ecumenicals and evangelicals have exchanged their positions, i.e., ecumenicals turning into evangelicals and vice versa. But it is true that followers of the third way manage to bridge the separation of religions inherited from the past. Although the base for commonality is looked for outside religion. i.e. in common citizenship, this secular base could break through separation. Its position is close to the paradigm of religious plurality, to which we now turn our attention.

3. Mission and Dialogue as means of communication within the paradigm of religious plurality

As has been said above concerning this paradigm. it is the religion and not the person that is the pivotal point. Communication within this paradigm can also happen in two ways. The first way is to regard in a negative way the emphasis on the uniqueness of every religion. Some have argued that the effort to prove this uniqueness in an objective way has failed because religions share many commonalities. Others show that discourse about uniqueness often functions as a guise meant

to point out one's superiority over others. Superiority breeds exclusiveness. The discussion is similar to the problem of the notion of election in the Christian Bible. How could Christians (and the Jewish people) argue that they are the elect of God? Does not God create human beings as equals? Elsewhere I have tried to read passages about election in the Bible as a kind of vocational awareness of ministry toward the needs of the world, while admitting that these passages had indeed been used hitherto in a context of triumphalism.[11] The same line of thought could be used in replying to the objections to the uniqueness of every religion. No doubt religions share many commonalities but on the other hand there are [illegible] differences. Many of [illegible] differences are superficial and [illegible] as we discover [illegible] the process of being aware of the [illegible] in the con[illegible] also differences that are not superficial, but deeply ingrained as the result of a long process of identity (re)construction.

This negative approach is again influenced by a certain understanding of secularization or secularism, which tends to see religion as part of the problem and not part of the solution to the problem. According to this understanding, a relationship among religions is best achieved by using a secular, "objective" foundation rather than a subjective foundation such as the idea of the uniqueness of one's religion. From the New Order era up to the Reformation era and now in the so-called Post-Reformation era, many Christians have held to secular foundations such as "common citizenship". The nation and state of Indonesia is God-given, and we can live together in this country as good citizens. The criteria of a good citizen can be measured from the Pancasila, which is a secular ideology, but very accommodating toward the plurality of religions in Indonesia. This is why many Christians blame the recent limitation of religious freedom, such in the case of GKI Yasmin, as a retreat from a state ideology of Pancasila.

This objection to the uniqueness of religion is also voiced by mystical groups ("kebatinan") who assume that religion has lost its spiritual core, i.e., universalism, and become exponents of particularism or exclusivism. If only religions retain their spiritual core (which is the

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[11] Cf. E.G.Singgih, Ide Umat Terpilih dalam Perjanjian Lama [The Idea of an Elect People, following H.H. Rowley], in: id., *Iman dan Politik dalam era Reformasi di Indonesia* [Faith and Politics in the era of Reformation in Indonesia], Jakarta 2000, 126-141 and E.G. Singgih From Oppressive Calvinism to Transformative Calvinism in Indonesia. Learning from South Africa, in: Christoph Stueckelberger and Reinhold Bernhardt (eds), *Calvin Global: How Faith Influences Societies*, Globethics.net, 217-230 (following De Gruchy).

same core in all of the religions in Indonesia), then conflict among religions, especially between Muslims and Christians such as happened from 1999-2002 in the eastern part of the country does not need to happen. There is of course something to be reflected on in this assumption. A positive formulation of this position can be seen in many discourses on pluralism in Indonesia, especially following (and interpreting) the idea of John Hick, that religions could be involved in dialogue based on this unifying core.[12] If this core is regarded as part of commonality among religions, besides their differences, then of course to be reminded of this spiritual core is remedial for religions. However, the assumption above holds that religions have lost their spiritual core, but the mystical groups have preserved it. So this is also a claim of superiority, albeit in a different form.

Whether the mystical groups are free from exclusivistic emphases could of course be questioned, but it is clear that an "objective" ground or core, whether a secular one or a spiritual one (which actually contradicts one another) can be mentioned together. The message that is communicated is also clear: if you want a harmonious relationship between religions in Indonesia, become spiritual or become secular! In some Christian circles, this idea of secularity as a base for dialogue can be seen in pleas to stop regarding the Bible as the word of God. The influence of modern biblical historical methods should not be lamented, because it is precisely this "de-scripturalization" of Scripture that could help religions, for instance, Islam and Christianity to relate better to one another. The sacred texts are full of admonitions to hate non-believers, despite the teachings of Jesus to love our enemies. If these "hate" texts lost their grip on the people, then we can stop regarding people of other faiths as our enemies. Of course the application of biblical historical method happens only in Christian circles, i.e., in theological schools, but, so the argument goes, others may follow the Christians. These pleas are pushing the base of secularity too far (the same holds for the mystical groups who also tend to see sacred texts as being inferior vehicles of divine communication compared with the divine voice within the hearts of human beings). It could also be doubted whether the proponents of this kind of "de-scripturalization" really mean what they say. Perhaps what they really want to say is that "[illegible]" should de-scripturalize their scripture!

[12] Cf. for instance Suratno, *[illegible] of John Hick* [illegible] M.A. Thesis, [illegible] Studies, The Universit[illegible] Mada, Yogyakarta 2002

For better or for worse, the sacred texts form an important part (if not the most important part) of religions' identity, especially in Islam, but also in Christianity. In Christianity there are various opinions concerning the sacredness of the Bible, from the "high" view, which regards the Bible as revelation of God, to the "low" view, which regards the Bible as a symbol of the word of God. In the first view the Bible is placed in a par with the position of Christ, while in the second the Bible is placed under Christ. However, those who follow the second view cannot be regarded as desacralizing the Bible, precisely because the Bible points to Christ.

The second way is the opposite of the first way. Here the uniqueness of religion is not denied, what is [illegible] as good in religion is confirmed, and it is acknowledged that there is much that has been done by religions for the good of our country, especially in community empowerment through social criticism. It differs from the paradigm of religious freedom and from the first type of paradigm of religious freedom, in that other religions are no longer regarded as being inferior to one's own religion. All religions are equal. It counters the idea of supersession. At the same time there is humility in being open to the shortcomings of religion. Acknowledgement of the limitation of religion becomes the characteristic of th[illegible] living together. While in the third way within the paradigm of religious freedom, religion participates in programs of community development, with participation mostly organized by the government, in this paradigm, religion participates in community empowerment, which is mostly run by non-governmental organizations.

To my knowledge, this second way within the paradigm of religious plurality is introduced in Indonesia by Mega Hidayati, a Muslim woman theologian.[13] She uses the thinking of Gadamer, who points to the limitation of human beings who have to live in open dialogue with others because of it.[14] But as we know, Gadamer comes from an era when dialogue among people of different faiths had not yet begun, so Mega complements her view by looking at Paul Knitter's four models of religious dialogue, namely the Replacement Model (which aimed to unify religious plurality), the Fulfillment Model (which aimed to cre-

[13] Mega Hidayati, *Jurang di antara Kita*, Yogyakarta 2008. She is now pursuing doctoral studies at The Indonesian Consortium of Religious Studies (ICRS), Yogyakarta, a PhD program under the auspicies of Gadjah Mada State University (UGM), Islamic State University (UIN) and Duta Wacana Christian University.

[14] Cf. Mega Hidayati, chapter 2.

ate a balance between particularity and universality), the Mutuality Model (which emphasizes commonality), and the Acceptance Model (which does not believe that there is commonality).[15] According to Mega, Gadamer's thinking is akin to the Acceptance model, and she also accepts this model for interactions among religions in Indonesia. I am not sure whether Knitter's Acceptance will entirely fit within our description of the paradigm of religious plurality. If it does not believe there is commonality, then it is different from what has been described above, that religions contain both commonalities and differences with one another. Precisely because of their complex character, religions always need to be in dialogue with one another. This is their mission, or in other words, in this new paradigm, mission and dialogue are not antithetical to one another, nor are they parallel to one another, but they are one: mission *is* dialogue![16]

Conclusion

The second way within the paradigm of religious pluralism which accepts that all religions are equal in the sense that all contain surpluses but also shortcomings, and that is why they always have to relate in dialogue with one another, is a good model (but not the best model) to be applied in the complicated relations among religions in Indonesia.

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Conclusion

The second way within the paradigm of religious pluralism which accepts that all religions are equal in the sense that all contain surpluses but also shortcomings, and that is why they always have to relate in dialogue with one another, is a good model (but not the best model) to be applied in the complicated relations among religions in Indonesia. But as we have seen above in our theory of paradigm shift, a new paradigm does not necessarily cause the demise of the earlier paradigm. So the appearance of the new paradigm of religious pluralism does not cause the demise of the old paradigm of religious freedom. Both can be used in our common struggle to achieve a better life of good and neighbourly relationship between religions in Indonesia. I have also tried to show that within each paradigm, there are also trends that are not conducive in moving toward this aim. So concretely I propose that we follow the third way within the paradigm of religious freedom, and the second way within the paradigm of religious plurality.

I hope it is also clear from my description above that while I mention mission in the first paradigm more often than dialogue, this does

[15] Cf. Paul Knitter, *Introducing Theologies of Religions*, Maryknoll, NY 2002.

[16] Long ago D.C. Mulder has foreseen this merger between mission and dialogue. Cf. D.C. Mulder, Dialoog als zending [dialogue as mission], in *Zending op weg naar de toekomst: essays aangeboden aan Prof. Dr. J. Verkuyl*, [illegible] et al. (eds), Kampen 1978, 137-148. Mulder is careful to explain that this definition should not be understood in the sense of dialogue as a means of mission. Dialogue is a way of life, a witness. But perhaps if the title above is reversed, "zending als dialoog" [mission as dialogue], then it is clear that mission could be understood as dialogue [illegible] identified with dialogue.

not mean that mission is more suited to the first paradigm of religious freedom, while dialogue is more suited to the second paradigm of religious plurality. In the second paradigm a thorough theology of religions is needed in order to undertake dialogue as a means of communication with the other. But mission in a new sense as part of dialogue can also play a role in the second paradigm. When all religions are seen as equal, containing both surpluses but also shortcomings, they need *to learn* from each other, and at the same time they also need *to teach* one another!

Dialogue through the Arts. Towards an Aesthetics of Interreligious Encounter

Volker Küster

From its very beginning Christianity has been a translation movement.[1] Crossing borders, leading to the encounter with other cultures and religions early on, was inevitable for adherents of a religion that proclaimed universal salvation in Jesus Christ. The wandering charismatic Jesus still represented an inner Jewish reformation movement. He felt himself sent to the Jews. At the same time his life world was affected by the Roman Empire and Hellenistic culture – the Via Maris passed the sea of Gal[illegible] cities like Tiberias, Sephoris and the Decapolis were within walking distance. Pagans like the Syrophenician women (Mark 7:24-30; Matthew 15:21-28) and the Roman centurion (Luke 7:1-10; Matthew [illegible]) were not rejected but there was no mission agenda yet. This developed in the circles of Jesus sympathizers around Diaspora synagogues. In the early discussions about a suitable mission strategy Paul successfully defended his stance that non-Jewish converts did not have to become circumcised neither had they to obey the dietary rules of Judaism (Galatians 2.1-10; Acts 15.1-35). This opened the door to cultural diversity within Christianity. The emergence of a new religion parallel to the identity reconstruction taking place in Rabbinic Judaism at the same time, however, laid the foundation for Christian anti-judaism.

Islam and Buddhism share missionary zeal with Christianity and interact with local cultures and religions in their own ways. A good example for iconographic cross over along the silk road – travelled by

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[1] Cf. Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message. The Missionary Impact on Culture*, Maryknoll, NY 1989 [revised edition 2009].

Nestorian Christians and Buddhist monks alike – is the gender switch of the Buddhist bodhisattva Guanyin from male to female, inspired by the iconography of local goddesses or the Christian Mother Mary. Later in the Jesuit period the iconography of Guanyin influenced the Asian look of Mary. With the exception of the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms of Southeast Asia (3rd/4th c. – 15th/16th c.), Judaism and Hinduism have mainly spread as migrant religions, forming Diasporas. Yet they also have interacted with local cultures and religions as can be seen by looking at synagogue architecture[2] or the integration of local deities into the Hindu pantheon. The reception of modern themes in traditional art forms or the transposition of temporary sand paintings or murals on canvas shows that tribal cultures are open to iconographic exchanges as well.

Interreligious dialogue is a modern project mainly initiated by Christianity. Its root cause was Christian guilt and repentance with regard to the Holocaust. In a certain sense Jewish-Christian dialogue is the mother of all interreligious dialogues. Yet in earlier times there was interest in interreligious conversation from the Muslim side in Andalusia (8th – 15th c.) and at the Mughal court in India (16th /17th c.). In both cases also iconographic interactions took place, like Mozarabic elements in the architecture of Romanesque Churches or the Mughal miniatures that cover Muslim, Hindu and Christian themes.[3] In Christian mission history there is material evidence of interreligious encounter through the arts already from the 7th /8th century onwards.[4]

This article is a first attempt to develop an aesthetic of interreligious encounter. After an historic overview (1), I sketch a typology of interreligious aesthetics (2), drawing on terminologies, concepts and theories derived from intercultural theology. In the concluding practical part, the theory is tested on a sample of Indonesian artists from Christian and Muslim backgrounds (3).

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2 [illegible] have been making use [illegible]

3 Cf. José Fernández Arenas, *La Arquitectura Mozárabe* [illegible] Fontaine, *L'Art Moza[illegible]* [illegible] *Préroman Hispanique*, Vol. 2, [illegible] J.M. Rogers, *Mughal Miniatures*, London 1993; Felix zu Löwenstein, [illegible] *altindischer Malerei*, Münster 1958.

4 Cf. Volker Küster, Art.: Art and Religion: III.2.i. Asia, Africa, Latin America, in: *Religion Past and Present. Encyclopedia of Theology and Religion* [RPP], Vol. 1, Leiden and Boston 2007, 411-413; id., Christian Art in Asia: Yesterday and Today, in: *The Christian Story: Five Asian Artists Today*, Museum of Biblical Art, New York and London 2007, 28-43.

1. Christian iconography in interreligious encounters through the ages

At the beginning there was an aniconic phase in Christian religion. Believers did not dare to depict the "mysterium tremendum and fascinans".[5] The cross and the fish may have been the first cautious symbolic representations of Christianity.[6] When in the 3rd century some artists turned to familiar art forms to develop a Christian iconography, Hermes, the Hellenistic messenger of the gods, became a model for the Good Shepherd.

A few hundred years later in the East, the stele of Sianfu, founding document of Nestorian Christianity in China, bore on its top an engraving of a Syrian cross standing on a lotus flower. In Hindu and Buddhist iconography the lotus is the seat or rostrum of the gods and the Buddha. The Christian symbol is thus not superimposed on the lotus, as some suspicious postcolonial minds may suggest, but to the contrary the [illegible].

The Syrian cross [illegible] so much a symbol of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ [illegible] his resurrection. This cosmic symbol [illegible] combines well with [illegible] ornaments to the [illegible] right. As the cross is the symbol for Christianity, so the lotus is [illegible] Hinduism and especially [illegible] Buddhism. Growing out of the mud, a beautiful flower symbolizes purity. This again compliments the accompanying lilies to the left and right. In Western medieval depictions of the annunciation, the angel often holds a white lily as a symbol of purity.[7]

The Jesuit mission in the 16th century initiated *accommodated* Christian art in China, India and other mission territories. A few silk paintings and miniatures depicting the Madonna with Asian features and costumes have been preserved. The child on her arms is often still reminiscent of the Western Renaissance models that were handed out by the missionaries to the local artists. The closer the painter gets to the holy, the more reluctant he becomes to accommodate, one could

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[5] Cf. Rudolf Otto, *Das Heilige. Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen*. Breslau 1917 [Engl. 1923].

[6] Due to the mysterium religions usually go through an aniconic phase. Christianity started up with symbols like the cross and the fish. Hinduism has the lingam and yoni, and Buddhism the eight-spoked wheel of teaching and the footprint of the Buddha. Religions that follow a prohibition of images like Judaism and Islam remain aniconic and ornamental at least in official religion and in public.

[7] Cf. the St. Thomas Cross in India from the same period, both reprinted in: Küster, Christian Art in Asia, 29f.

presume. The resurgence of the missionary movement in the 19th century initially rejected things indigenous out of a strong Eurocentrism. Nevertheless there was some indigenized Christian art even in Protestant circles. Yet it was mainly a Catholic renaissance starting in the 1930s that produced a kind of neo-accommodation, flourishing around art schools established by missionary orders.

In Indonesia e.g., the Dutch plantation owner and Catholic lay theologian Prof. Dr. Joseph Ignaz Schmutzer (1882-1946) drew sketches for sculptures of Mary and/or Jesus in Hindu-Javanese style. They were realized by the Muslim sculptor and woodcarver Iko. On his plantation in Ganjuran, Schmutzer also built a Sacret Heart shrine in the style of the nearby Hindu temple Prambanang. Schmutzer was convinced that the Hindu imagery was better suited for the accommodation of Christian faith in Java than that of its kindred religion Islam.[8]

For the creation of two statues of Mary, Schmutzer followed closely the iconography of the originally Buddhist queen of wisdom Prajnaparamita, who occasionally is also called princess Dedes (*Putri Desi*) and is very popular on Java.[9] As the first queen of Singhasari, she became the mother of the kings of Singhasari and Majapahit. Accordingly, Mary sits on a throne dressed like a Javanese queen, surrounded by a halo. She wears a crown on her head and precious jewels around her neck and at her ears. On her lap sits baby Jesus depicted as a small adult, following the western model. Jesus also wears Javanese royal dress. His crowned head is encircled by a halo. The index and middle fingers of his right hand join to point upward in a gesture of benediction, while, the tips of thumb, ring and little finger are brought together to form a circle, the symbol of the Trinity. In his left hand, Jesus holds a sphere, reminiscent of the orb in western iconography, which obviously could not be assigned a new function in the foreign context.

With the emancipation of Christian [illegible] and theology after World War Two a contextual Christian Art developed. When I speak of "Christian" art here, I take [illegible] certain "non-simultaneousness of simultaneous phenomena (*Ungleichzeitigkeit des Gleichzeitigen*)". The Christian [illegible] constructions through the arts in Africa, Asia and Latin America are, however, more comparable

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8 Cf. Joseph Schmutzer et al. *[illegible]*, [illegible] Utrecht and Leuven 1928.
9 [illegible]

to Early Christian or medieval art in the West than to modern art. We will have a closer look at the Indonesian case in the third part of this article.

2. Typology of aesthetics of interreligious encounter

The two extreme positions in interreligious encounter are the total rejection of the religious other in *fundamentalism* and the mingling with other religions in *syncretism*. The discussions around the relationship between Christian faith and culture as well as other religions have produced a terminological framework on which we can rely.[10] The *accommodation model* tries to keep form and content, Christian faith and culture, apart, like kernel and husk of a nut. Proponents of the *inculturation model*, however, are aware of the inevitable exchange that is taking place wherever cultures and religions meet. The relationship between Christian faith and culture is accordingly compared to an onion. If one peels off the layers nothing is left in the end. *Syncretism* des[illegible] of interreligious exchange when one religion takes over elements of another religion. As long as it is able to integrate them creatively in its own system this is a matter of intra-religious change. Yet there are also cases in which the elements of the other religion transform the receiving religion in a way that a new religious movement develops.

A *theology of religions* reflects on the role of other religions in the Christian frame of reference. Basically it is torn by an exclusivism-inclusivism dilemma. The religious other is either lost if he or she does not convert or they are already included by the grace of God. The postmodern pluralist theology of religions aimed to break through this dilemma but ended up in a sort of meta-inclusivism that saw all religions converging at some point of salvation. Most evangelicals today are well-behaved exclusivists in this respect. Inculturation can be regarded as a form of inclusivism or integrated syncretism. In *interreligious dialogue* the partners encounter each other in mutual respect and make themselves vulnerable to one another by crossing the borders of their own community. They try to understand the other in a way that he or she can recognize him or herself in that perception, while at the same time the dialogue partners give witness to their respective tradition. What does all this mean for interreligious aesthetics?

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[10] Cf. Volker Küster, Who, with whom; id., *The Many Faces of Jesus Christ. Intercultural Christology*, Maryknoll, NY 2001, 1-36.

Fundamentalism leads to internal and external iconoclasms. Even the Bible and Qur'an relate such incidents.[11] In Byzantium the Christian iconoclasts were not least inspired by the Muslim prohibition of images. In the West the radical wing of the reformation wanted to make visible its dissociation from Roman Catholicism through iconoclasm. Interreligious iconoclasm took place in the mission field, when wooden sculptures of primal religions were burned and stone statues and temples of Hinduism and Buddhism were torn down. Even today fundamentalist Korean Christians smear paint on Buddha statues or even damage them. Radical Muslims attack Hindu temples and Christian churches in India and blow up Buddhist sculptures in Afghanistan. Hindu fundamentalists attack churches and mosques alike. While images of Jesus in Hindu temples are mere *syncretism*, *inculturation* produces images of the dancing Christ influenced by the dancing Shiva (*shiva nataraja*) or Jesus the teacher, inspired by the Buddha.[12]

"*Dialogue* through the arts" finally opens up several perspectives in accordance with the classic hermeneutic patterns: behind the image, in the image and in front of the image, or dialogue of the artists, dialogue of the images and dialogue of the viewers. In a similar way the iconoclasts argue in their polemics that the artist replaces God as creator, the artwork replaces God, or the viewer venerates the artwork instead of God. Catholic missionaries commissioned local craftsmen and artists who were adherents of other religions, whether Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam or primary religion to build churches or create Christian sculpture and painting. These artists brought their own iconographic repertoire with them, which influenced the Christian imagery introduced to them by the missionaries. Some of them converted through their engagement with Christian themes themselves. Other artists started to paint Christian themes after their conversion but drew on their cultural knowledge nevertheless. Besides this inner dialogue of the individual artist, artists were also influenced by each other's work. Through this encounter non-Christian artists might well get inspired to depict Christian themes out of curiosity for the subject. The artists might even engage in a direct dialogue with each other. Secondly the artworks themselves can enter into a dialogue while hanging next to each other, or, for that matter, inspire the viewer. The curator

[11] Cf. Judges 6.25f; 2 Kings 18.4 and 23; 2. Chronicles 34; Sura [19.44ff], 21.58ff.

[12] Cf. the images of Christ by Nyoman Darsane and S[illegible] in Volker Küster, "... and foolishness to Gentiles", Images of Christ from [illegible] *Mission Studies* 12, 1995, 95-112

has of course a certain maieutic function in this process in terms of selecting and hanging the paintings. How do artworks of different religious affiliation address issues of human life and its transcendence? To what extent are they expressions of faith through the arts. Finally, artworks – not necessarily only religious ones – create a "third space" for viewers of different religious affiliation to get into a dialogue about what they see and feel. In all three forms of aesthetic dialogue translation, questioning and exchange are the basic patterns.

3. Contemporary Religious Art on Java

The rise of Islam on Java in the 15th century was a setback for the visual culture of the Hindu-Buddhist Religion. Still this visual culture eventually made its inroads into the Javanese branch of Islam that started to develop. With the rise of modern Indonesian art in the 1930s, artists of Muslim background also entered the scene. Aniconic aesthetic expressions like calligraphy have a certain affinity to modern abstract art. In contemporary art this has led to hybrid developments.

After the pioneering initiative of Schmutzer in the 1930s, it took a few decades for a Christian art scene to develop. Interestingly enough Sudjojono (1914/17-1986), the father of modern Indonesian painting, was a Christian himself and also painted some Christian motifs. The 1993 book *Many Faces of Christian Art in Indonesia*, published by the National Council of Churches, counts some 48 artists, most of them working on Java or Bali.[14]

Muslim, Christian and Hindu artists had earlier shown their work in joint exhibitions on Java.[15] Yet for the first time in the Yogya exhibition on the occasion of the conference of the Indonesian-Dutch Consortium on Muslim-Christian Relations (March 26-30, 2012) this took place under the explicit theme "Dialogue through the Arts". Several of the artists were present during the opening ceremony and debated the subject during a panel in the auditorium of Duta Wacana Christian University. In what follows I will briefly introduce the artists personally and interpret one painting by each of them.

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[13] Cf. Volker Küster, A Dialogue in Pictures. Reformbuddhism and Christianity in the Works of Ven. Hatigammana Uttarananda / Sri Lanka, in: *Exchange* 39, 2010, 6-28.

[14] *Many Faces of Christian Art in Indonesia* [Beberapa Wajah Seni Rupa Kristiani Indonesia], ed. by Communion of Churches in Indonesia [Persekutuan Gereja-Gereja di Indonesia], Jakarta 1993.

[15] Cf. Catalogue Asian Spiritual Art Exhibition, Yogyakarta 2001; Dia Sang Kasih Buah Expresilmam. Pameran Seni Rupa Religius, Jakarta 2006.

The Christian Art Scene in Yogyakarta[16]

Yogyakarta, Java's youth-full university city and one of the two remaining sultanates in Indonesia, is second only to the scenic island of Bali as the site of a flourishing Christian art scene. With a population that is ca. 95 percent Hindu, Bali remains a haven for Hinduism, while Yogya today, like the rest of the country, is dominated by Islam. The Hindu-Buddhist past remains present, however, in the impressive, partly restored temple ruins of Prambanan and Borobudur not far from the city. Similar to Balinese Hinduism that not only absorbed Buddhism but also is a syncretistic amalgamation of traditional religion and culture (*Agama Hindu Bali*), Javanese Islam is at the same time drenched in traditional mysticism and the Hindu-Buddhist heritage. The iconography of the pillars in the entrance hall of the sultan's palace (*kraton*), already reflect this in their symbolism. The pillars are green – the color of Islam – with their lower parts decorated with a red and white lotus flower (Buddhism) and stylized elephant feet (Hinduism). The sultan has so far opposed fundamentalist tendencies within Islam and has also shown a tolerant attitude towards Christianity. Traditionally the *kraton* provides a space for art and crafts and the sultan officiates as patron and sponsor.

As early as 1949/50, soon after the Republic of Indonesia was founded (1945), the government established an Art Academy in Yogyakarta (ASRI – *Akademi Seni Rupa Indonesia*) that over the years has become the leading institution in the country.[17] After a merger with two other art institutions for music (*AMI – Akademi Musik Indonesia*) and dance (ASTI – *Akademi Seni Tari Indonesia*), in 1984 ASRI became Indonesia Art Institute (ISI – *Institute Seni Indonesia*). ISI maintains a vibrant, interactive relationship with the local art scene. Many of the artists portrayed in what follows have some kind of connection with it.

(1) Bagong Kussudiardja

The most charismatic representative of the Christian art scene in Yogya was the dancer and painter Bagong Kussudiardja (1929-2004). Born into a family of Javanese Muslims (*abangan*) belonging to the local gentry (*bangsawan*) of the Sultan's palace, he spent his whole life in his birthplace Yogyakarta. His wife being a Christian, Bagong

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[16] For a full account cf. Volker Küster, *The Christian Art Scene in Yogyakarta*, Kampen 2012.

[17] Letter of the Ministry of Education and Culture No. 22 Kebud, December 14, 1949.

converted together with [illegible] children in 1968/69. Other families in the *kraton* followed his example.

Before his conversion Bagong was experimenting with traditional styles and themes. As early as 1948 he had begun to study painting with leading artists like Affandi (1907-1990), Hendra Gunawan (1918-1983), Kusnadi (1942-1997) and Sudiardjo of the thriving local art scene. He soon started to teach at the Art Academy (ASRI) himself. He was not only a painter and Batik artist[18], but also took lessons in traditional dance and became a well-known choreographer. Already in 1958 he had established a Dance Training Center (PTL). The artist himself once stated: "Art is a part of my life. I feel that one needs art just as one needs food, clothing and shelter."[19] Works with Christian motifs constitute only a small part of his rich oeuvre.

Christ and the Fishermen

This painting marks a rupture with the classical accommodation and inculturation art that give the universal Christian message a local expression (fig. 1). The traditional Indonesian fishing boats in the background are nostalgic. They suggest that Jesus Christ has arrived at a beach in the Indonesian islands. Shadowy figures are on their way to go fishing, just as Jesus' disciples were, at the Sea of Galilee 2000 years ago.

The group of people in the foreground evokes a quite different impression. Jesus in a blue bathing suit and muscle shirt, shoulder-length hair, full beard and hip metal-rimmed sunglasses, spreads his arms in an all-encompassing gesture. He attracts the full attention of the fishermen standing and crouching around him. Some of the contours of these figures remind the beholder of shadow puppets. They are mainly dressed in shorts and T-shirts. Their skin-color ranges from black, brown and red to the white skin of the person at Jesus' back. Contrary to the common habit of claiming Jesus for the particular context, the artist plays here with the universal dimension of Christian faith. The casual clothes, the signature of global youth culture, symbolize at the same time the irruption of modernity into Indonesian society. Plural modernities, integrating the western hyperculture of consumer capitalism in a hybrid mix of different influences into their

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[18] It is said that using the batik technique to produce paintings was introduced in Yogya by Bagong in the 1970s.

[19] Masao Takenaka and Ron O'Grady (eds), *The Bible through Asian Eyes*, Auckland etc. 1991, 164.

own culture, have already developed. Jesus Christ is present amongst all of this.

(2) Nyoman Darsane - A Balinese alter ego

Nyoman Darsane[20] who received part of his art education on Java and in his early years kept close contacts with the art scene there is the Nestor of Balinese Christian art and in many respects Bagong's alter ego. Born and raised as a Hindu (*1939) Darsane converted to Christianity at the age of 17. Like many Balinese rice farmers, his father was also a musician who played in the orchestra of the local ruler. Nyoman was brought up together with one of the princes and educated in the palace. That experience provided him with a deep knowledge of Hindu-Balinese religion and culture. It paved the way for him to not only become a painter but also a musician, dancer and puppeteer. His academic training at the college in Semarang, Java finally made him familiar with the western tradition as well. His early paintings are reminiscent of Gauguin, van Gogh and Nolde. Darsane thus belongs to the heterogeneous group of the so-called *academicians*, those artists who have studied at one of the country's art colleges. Although they are experimenting with western influenced style, they have continuously been searching for their own Balinese identity. In Darsane's case there is a special emphasis added to this: since he converted to Christianity, he has been trying to mold this religion into a Balinese-Christian form.

As a result of his conversion, Darsane had been excluded from his family and ostracized by the village community. The Hindu-Balinese religion originated from the encounter between Hinduism and Balinese tribal religions, and even today it retains many features of this primal religion. Religion and community are closely intertwined; whoever turns away from the common religion also renounces the solidarity of the community. Instead of the customary prearranged marriage Darsane made his own choice by marrying a Christian woman of Chinese descent. Their only child Yossy has become an artist himself. His constant effort to give Christianity a Balinese shape final-

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[20] Cf. Volker Küster, Karel Steenbrink and Rai Sudhiarsa, Christian Art in Indonesia, in: Jan Sihar Aritonang and Karel Steenbrink (eds), *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, Leiden and Boston 2008, 925-949, 940-947; id., Accommodation or Contextualisation? Ketut Lasia and Nyoman Darsane – Two Balinese Christian Artists, in: *Mission Studies* 16, 1999, 157-172; id. / Theo Sundermeier, *Das schöne Evangelium. Christliche Kunst im balinesischen Kontext*, Nettetal 1991; *Bali ist mein Leib – Christus ist mein Leben. Der Künstler I Nyoman Darsane*, Karl-Christoph Epting (ed.), Karlsruhe 1999.

ly convinced Darsane's family and the community that he still is one of them. Today he is again well respected and his advice even in religious matters is highly appreciated. Darsane and Bagong were friends and certainly influenced each other. The latter even had a studio and gallery on Bali for some years.

Rain of Blood

The composition is dominated by the presence of the crucified (fig. 3). The cross does not really look like a wooden torture instrument but is more a vague silhouette in the background. From the crossbeam red blood flows down in small streams that overlay another red that changes in intensity. The background colors vary from dark blue on the top and in the bottom corners to light pink in the lower part of the picture. Jesus does not so much hang on the cross as dance on it. His legs are disproportionately long. The feet are crossed, putting one in front of the other. His face expresses compassion with the suffering of the world. To his left, the contours of two *wayang* figures, traditional shadow puppets, are visible.

Until recently Darsane has very rarely depicted suffering or poverty in his pictures. He was the painter of the "beautiful gospel". The experience of the Bali bombings in the aftermath of 9/11 (2002 and 2005) and the tsunami (2004) however made him change his mind. The balance between good and evil that is crucial in Balinese worldview seems to be distorted. Both Darsane and Bagong show a clear tendency to move away from the inculturation mode of Christian art in Indonesia to a more hybridized glocal style that negotiates between the global and the local.

(3) Hendarto

Hendarto was born 1951 in Bandung, where his father, who served in the army, was stationed. Most of his life, however, he spent in Yogyakarta close to the Sultan's palace (*kraton*). He has been raised in the sphere of Javanese Islam, and that mystical heritage still leaves traces in his work. The artist converted to Catholicism only in the early 1980s, yet he had already attended a Catholic school, where he was attracted especially by religious education. His family did not practice Islam; therefore his conversion to Christianity did not really pose a problem for them. His older brother and a younger sister followed his example, while the rest of the family remained Muslim. Hendarto is married and has two children.

In art education at school Hendarto, who had been painting since in early childhood, was always the best in the class. Later he dropped out of his architecture studies to work as a freelance artist. In the beginning he experimented with *wayang*-style, batik, ceramics and woodcarving. He chose his teachers from among the artists in his neighborhood. Autonomy is important to him. Since his conversion to Christianity, Hendarto also depicts Christian themes: first sketches, aquarelle and batik, later oil and acrylics. For him, painting is at the same time a theological learning process – he tries to grasp the deeper sense of the Christian faith. Painting a Christian theme may take a long time. The artist meditates and has to concentrate himself fully on the subject. Therefore the number of his Christian paintings is limited. He says himself that he cannot always consider such themes, because it is too hard on him.

The resurrected

Jesus sits in the center of the painting, solid as a rock (fig. 2). His body divides the picture visually into two color fields along the diagonal that runs from the lower left to the upper right. In the upper part waves of godly sunlight seem to glide over Jesus' body. In their epicenter glows the gold yellow ball of the sun. The breath of God's spirit brings the elements into motion. The seated figure seems to be supported from below by plant-like forms in green and grey that form a directional contrast with the curving lines of the sunlight.

Jesus appears as a Javanese youth with long black hair. His right shoulder is uncovered. Around his body a cloth plays loosely, seeming to flow into the colors of its surroundings. His lowered eyes suggest he is lost in deep thought. On his left foot one can identify the mark of the cross. Hendarto, due to his Muslim background, is still struggling with Christology. While the earthly Jesus is familiar to him – the Qur'an knows him as a prophet and predecessor of Mohamed – the godly side of Jesus Christ remains a mystery to the artist. Hendarto's Christian paintings are personal testimonies of faith, which express his esthetic-theological struggle with the Christian message in the light of Javanese-Muslim mysticism.

(4) Wisnu Sasongko

The new shooting star on the scene is Wisnu Sasongko, the angry young man among Indonesia's Christian artists. Wisnu was born into a Christian family in Jakarta (*1975), his parents having converted

from Islam to Christianity. They moved with their children to Yogya. The mother is a dancer and Gamelan player; the father works as a teacher at a school for mentally handicapped children. His sister Wiwik is also artist, specializing in design.

Wisnu relates to a personal born again experience he had in 1998, in the context of political upheaval provoked by the new order policy of President Suharto. The riots were also directed against the Christian minority. This experience had direct impact on his artistic work and from then on he painted Christian themes. He wanted to meet discrimination and violence with the spirit of hope.[21]

Laughing Jesus

With his spectacles, beard and long black hair, Jesus looks like one of Sasongko's artist friends (fig. 4). The portrait's green background is full of icons of the brave new computer world. Jesus, anno 2012, is on facebook and twitter; e-mail is already obsolete. The artist himself once stated: "I don't want to paint biblical stories because I've never seen them, I've never touched them, and I've never seen what Jesus looked like. As an artist I can only imagine Jesus".[22] Sasongko can already look back on several solo and group exhibitions. He absorbs a varied mixture of stylistic influences from Indonesian artists like Widyayat (1923-2002), but also the Filipino Emmanuel Garibay (*1962) and western artists Paul Klee or Pablo Picasso. His paintings go beyond traditional inculturation art. They represent a new "glocal" Christian art.

The artists introduced here all have academic backgrounds. Most of them are connected in one way or the other to the local art academy ISI. But not everyone has finished his formal education. Learning from other artists and a certain autodidactic charm remains significant for them. Yet unlike traditionally trained artists, these so called "academicians" have been exposed to western art traditions in a formal way. Bagong and Hendarto are inculturation artists. In his later work, however, Bagong already tends toward glocal art as practiced by Wisnu Sasongko. All artists besides the Balinese Darsane have a Muslim family background. Some are converts themselves; others are already second- or third-generation Christians. Besides Hendarto, who is

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[21] Cf. the title of the catalog Wisnu Sasongko, *Think on these Things. Harmony and Diversity*. New Haven, CT: OMSC publications 2007.

[22] Sasongko, *Think on these Things*, 5. This catalog contains many paintings that are drawn in a Christian spirit but do not depict biblical themes.

clearly influenced by Javanese-Muslim mysticism, this heritage has not left any traces in their work. In Bagong's case, dance and *wayang* of the Hindu-Javanese tradition have become decisive structural elements in his compositions. This plurality of religious influences mirrors the open atmosphere of the sultanate. Some of the artists show certain tendencies towards abstraction, most obviously Bagong and Wisnu, while for Hendarto, at least regarding the background. The trend goes in the direction of a glocal art that plays with traditional iconographies and is not afraid of political critique.

Muslim artists on Java

Due to the prohibition of images, Muslim artists usually restrict themselves to calligraphy and ornamental art. The further away from the mosque, however, the more is possible in the private sphere of the ruling elite, who felt the need to decorate their houses for representative purposes and enjoyed the beauty of art. Illumination of manuscripts has been appreciated in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, even among the religious. Books can be easily closed to the suspicious eyes of fanatics. Generally speaking, in cultures that are image-friendly Islam is more receptive to visual arts as well. The miniatures in Persia and at the Mughal court in India are good examples. One can find images of Jesus, Buddha and even Muhammad that served liturgical and pedagogical purposes.

In modern Indonesian art, A.D. Pirous and Saiful Adnan are pioneers in turning calligraphy into abstract art. Among the participants in the exhibition in Yogya, Muhammad Satar and Azam Bachtiar followed the line that has been set out by Pirous and Adnan. Kaji Habeb goes further into figurative painting, representing even the prophet Muhammad himself. Similar to their Christian colleagues, not all of them have finished a formal art education. They also have to work, again mainly in teaching, to support themselves.

Saiful Adnan (Saniangbaka, Solok, West Sumatera *1957) places the calligraphy of Sura 49:15 in the center of his painting (fig. 7):

> Only those are Believers who have believed in Allah and his Messenger, and have never since doubted, but have striven with their belongings and their persons in the Cause of Allah: Such are the sincere ones.[23]

He tries to give the impression that the text is written on a worn out parchment that already shows cracks and grazes. Adnan is widely ac-

[23] Quran quoted after the translation by Abdullah Yusufali.

cepted as a reformer of calligraphic art, who created his own style called "Syaifuli Arabic Caligraphy". Basically he is producing paintings of calligraphies. The artist claims to be influenced not so much by other painters, but by religious teachers like Abdul Hamid Dimiyati of the Islamic State University in Yogyakarta and Sirajudin, an expert in calligraphy from Jakarta.

Pirous (Meulaboh, Aceh *1932) had formal art education at the Bandung Institute of Technology, where he also taught after graduation in 1964 till 2002. In 1969 he spent some time studying graphic design at the Department of Arts, Rochester Institute of Technology in New York State. He served as the first Dean of the faculty of Arts and Design (1984-1990). In his works the artist goes a step further than Adnan. In our example, Pirous places the calligraphy in two times two rectangular fragments at the bottom of the painting (fig. 5). It begins on the upper right one, continues below, then on to the top left and down again:

> Who has made the earth our couch, and the heavens our canopy; and send down rain from the heavens; and brought forth therewith fruits of your sustenance; then set not up rivals unto Allah when ye know (the truth).

While reading, it turns out that there is a direct connection between Sura 2,22 and the composition, which seems on first sight to be abstract. The calligraphy on the bottom of the painting in a sense symbolizes the pillars of the earth. The two clusters are separated by a line that forms the vertical axis of the painting. Its green color symbolizes the fruitful rain that God sends from heaven. Where it reaches the ground it turns red. Gold is applied to the top of the painting in praise of the God of heaven. The main surface of the painting is kept in different shades of blue.

Mohammed Satar (Probolinggo, East Java *1952) holds a bachelor's degree from the Fine Art Department of the Teacher Institute Malang. He teaches Painting and Esthetics at the Surabaya State University. In his paintings geometric composition comes even more to the fore. He is not writing whole Sura verses anymore, but fragments or even concentrating himself on the name of Allah (fig. 8).

Azam Bachtiar (Malang, East Java *1961) started in 1984 as a street painter stationed near the main post office of Malang. He quit his studies at the ISI in Yogya after only one year, because he wanted to take care of his aging parents. He later studied psychology in Malang. With his diptych on the 99 names of God Azam combines the heritage of Adnan and Pirous (fig. 6 and 9). The right canvas he [illegible]

divided into nine by ten squares that are separated by a red pattern. The left painting is mainly covered in black. Nine squares, four and five in a row, seem to drift away from the right panel. Like dust they are surrounded by some red color on black ground. On the left side of the diptych is a big red calligraphy and a piece of paper under gauze in a red and golden frame that turns out to be a page of the Qur'an.

Kaji Habeb (Denmak, Central Java *1969) studied at ISI and at the Faculty of Ushuluddin at the Islamic State University, Yogyakarta. He is not only a painter, but at the same time an actor, director and playwright. He also creates his own shadow puppets. Habeb is the most figurative among the Muslim artists introduced here. The last figure of his meta evolution series represents the prophet Muhammad himself (fig. 10 and 11). Only his face and hands seem to be covered with skin. The rest of the body is stripped to the muscles and nerves. The figure has neither mouth nor genitals.

The spiritual, sometimes even mystical, dimension of the paintings on display turned out to be a dialogical bridge for the artists during the panel discussion. Azam opened the conversation by stating: "Most of my paintings employ spiritual themes. They describe the struggle of my heart, the absolute [illegible] of the human being." Wisnu Sasongko has repeatedly stressed that he has never seen Jesus personally. Jesus is a "spiritual guru" to him "a mental experience" that inspirers his creativity. Habeb, who is rooted deeply in the Javanese mystical tradition, refered to his meta evolution series also as a "spiritual evolution". Darsane emphasized:

> Even though I am a Christian, I do not feel a difference that bothers me. Human beings are created from dust endowed with breath of life by God. [...] After thinking it over I noticed that there is no difference in my face before and after I became Christian. I just felt a change in my life. In the end, I came to the awareness that Bali is my body but Christ is my life.

Azam seems not far from him, when he states: "There is only one creator who creates us all. A *hadith* says that if you relate yourself with your neighbor, you relate yourself with God." The kind of spirituality the artists are talking about is not otherworldly. For Azam "[a]n art work is a never ending dialogue as together we want to understand God." Wisnu pointed out the ethical dimension of visual arts: "The basic idea is to create a harmonious world. A world full of differences, yet also beauty and unity. The language of art is the most universal language."

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

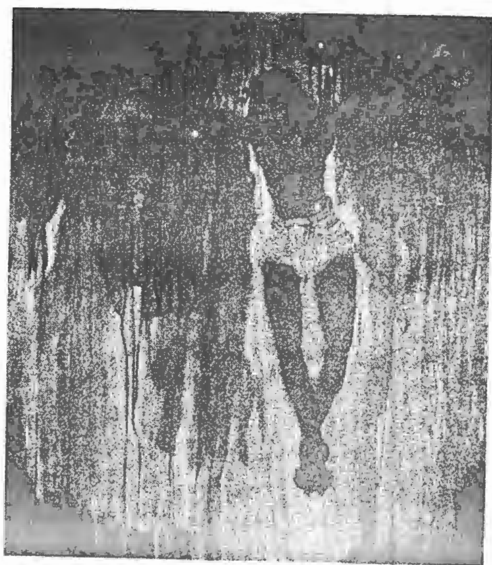


Fig. 3

Fig. 4

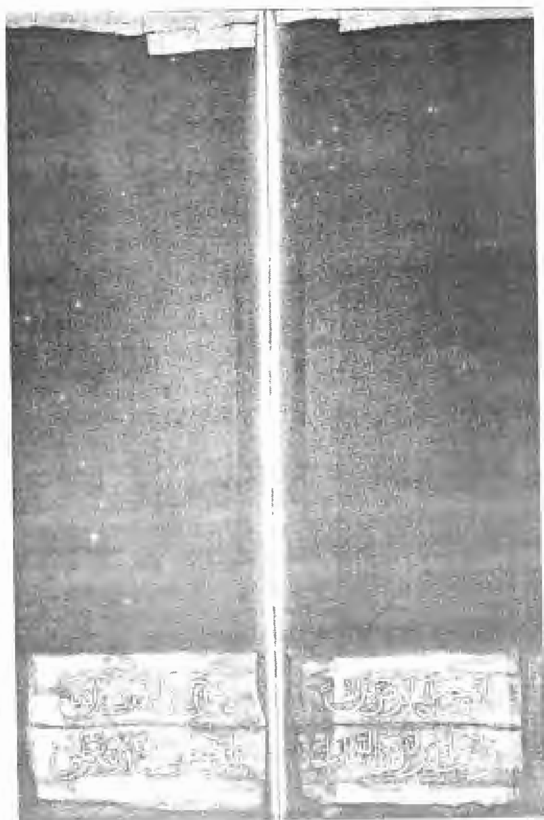
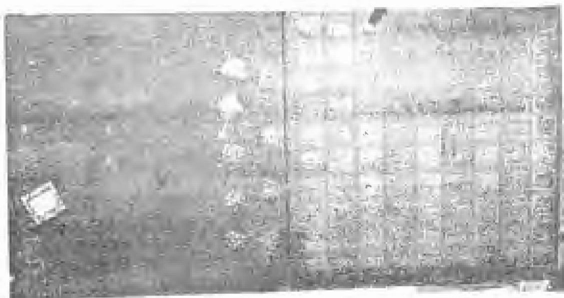


Fig 5



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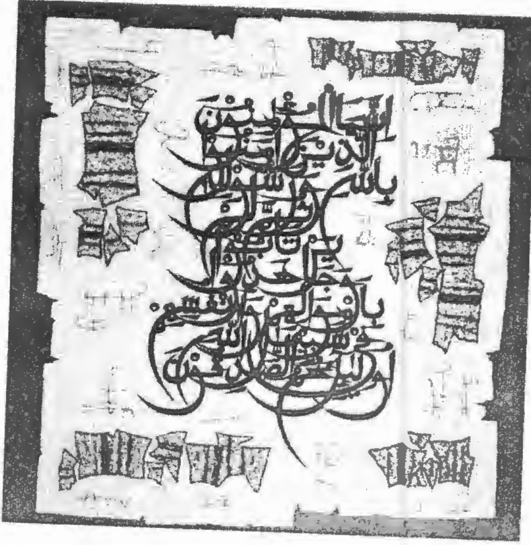

Fig. 7

Fig. 8

Fig. 9

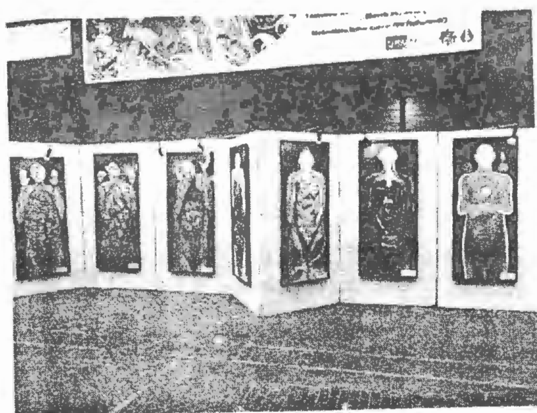

Fig. 10

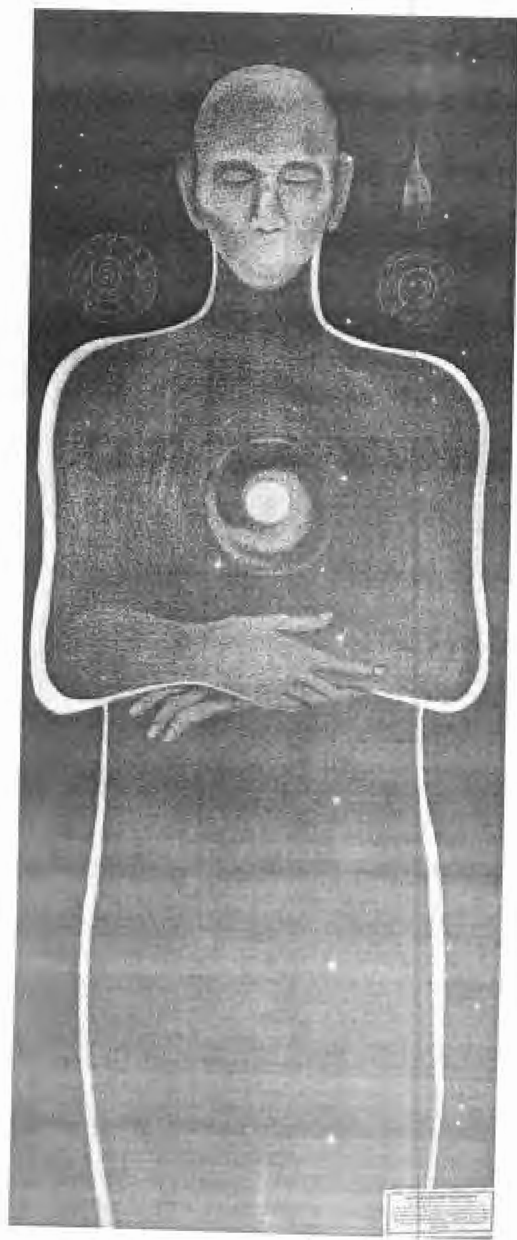

Fig. 11

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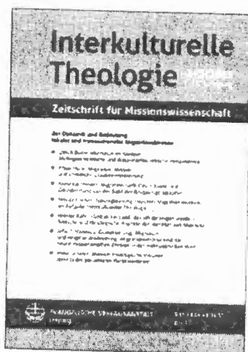

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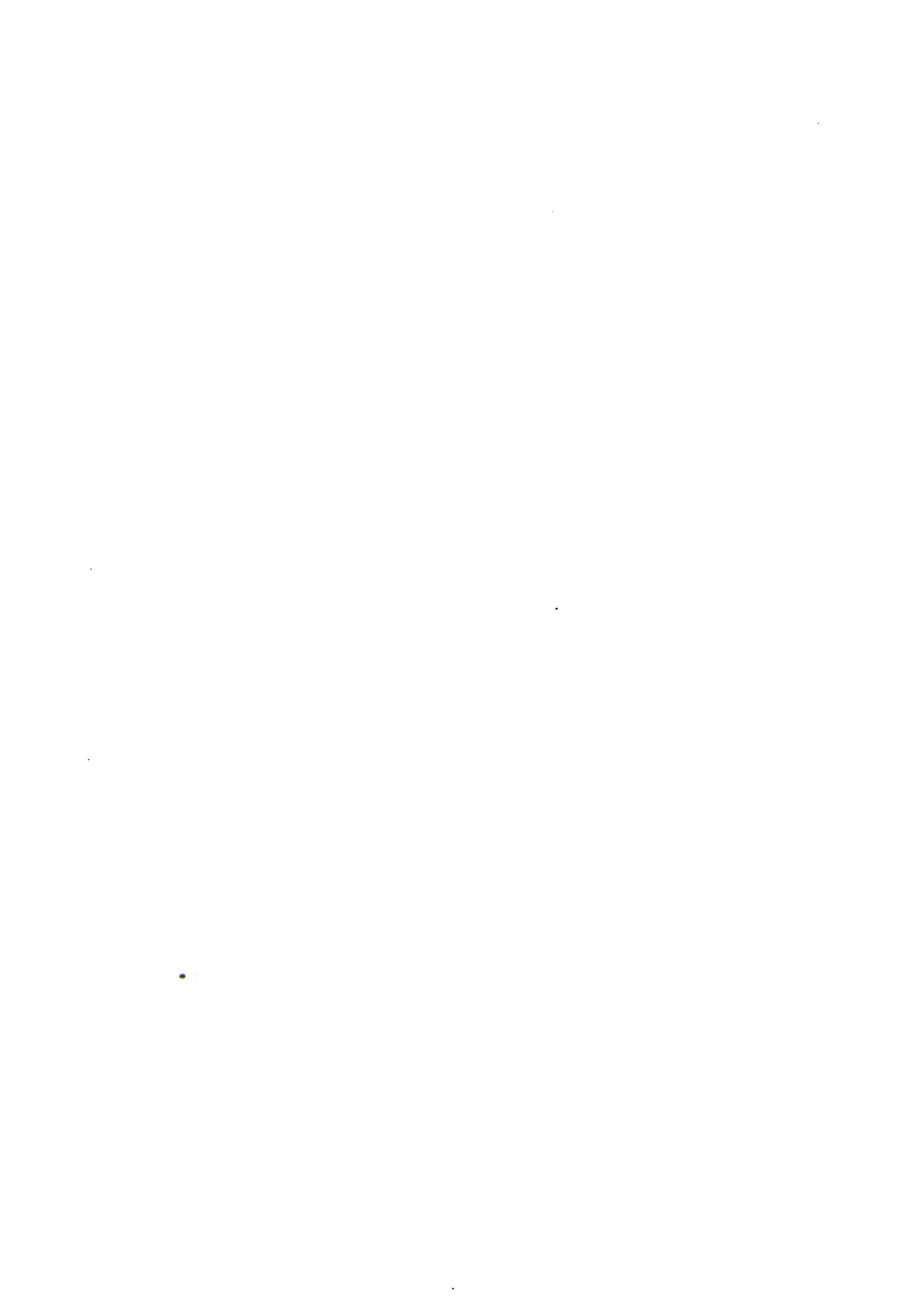

The Indonesian Dutch Consortium on Muslim-Christian Relations brought together academics, intellectuals as well as social activists from both countries, Christian and Muslim alike. While what is published here is the academic output, the impact of the consortium has therefore been much broader. The contributions are organized according to five generative themes: Identity, Religion and State, Gender, Hermeneutics and Theology of Dialogue. The book has attracted attention already before its publication. It is hoped that this project will inspire continuous efforts for interreligious dialogue.

»This interdisciplinary and comparative study of Muslim Christian relations in Indonesia and the Netherlands is a truly amazing collaborative effort. It provides rich empirical data, gender analysis, hermeneutical insights, and theological arguments that attend to the complexities on the ground and go far deeper than books I have read on interreligious dialogue. I highly recommend it.«

Kwok Pui-lan, Professor of Christian Theology and Spirituality at The Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, MA and author of Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology

»This is a very concrete, spirited and inspiring book! More than 25 mostly young scholars, Muslims and people from various Christian denominations, do not approach the old dichotomy between Pancasila versus the Islamic State, but discuss the micro-level: concrete observations how relations work (or not) outside political and religious authority. With a good deal of female authors and interest for the role of women.«

Karel Steenbrink, Prof. em. of Intercultural Theology, University of Utrecht (IIMO) and editor of A History of Christianity in Indonesia

»The impact of this fascinating book goes far beyond its focus on Muslim-Christian relations in Indonesia and the Netherlands: with strong impulses for both, dialogical practice in other contexts, e.g. Germany, and for research like ours on dialogical theology and interreligious dialogue in modern societies.«

Prof. Dr. *Katajun Amirpur* & Prof. Dr. *Wolfram Weisse*, Academy of World Religions, University of Hamburg

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